



THE MAKING OF SUPERMAN II

STARBURST INVESTIGATES BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE LONG-AWAITED SEQUEL TO SUPERMAN THE MOVIE. SEE PAGE 51.

#### THE HITCH HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

THE FIRST OF A TWO PART INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR OF HITCH HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY AND RESTAURANT AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE BEGINS ON PAGE 28.



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# STARBURST STARBURST

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Publisher: Stan Lee

#### STARBURST LETTERS 4

OUR READERS WRITE ON DANA
GILLESPIE, DOLBY STEREO, MOVIE
SOUND TRACKS AND JUST ABOUT
ANYTHING ELSE THAT SHOULD COME TO
HAND.

#### THINGS TO COME 6

TONY CRAWLEY REPORTS ON THE LATEST HAPPENINGS WITH THE FIELDS OF TV AND CINEMA FANTASY

#### EARTHQUAKE 7.9 12

A REVIEW OF THE LATEST IN A NEW WAVE OF JAPANESE DISASTER MOVIES AIMED AT A WORLD MARKET

#### MOTHER'S DAY 14

FOR ALL THOSE FED UP WITH THE MOVIES THAT DEPICT WOMEN AS THE VICTIMS, HERE'S A FILM IN WHICH THE GIRLS FIGHT RACK!

## SOMEWHERE IN TIME 16



CHRISTOPHER REEVE AND JANE SEYMOUR STAR IN A NEW TIME TRAVEL ROMANCE. JOHN BROSNAN WENT TO SEE THE FILM WITH A GOOD SUPPLY OF PAPER HANKIES.

#### COMPETITION RESULTS 18

SEE IF YOUR NAME IS AMONG THIS LIST OF LUCKY WINNERS...

#### THE ATTIC 19

WE REVIEW THE NEW LOW BUDGET HORROR MOVIE WHICH STARS RAY MILLAND AND CARRIE SNODGRESS.

#### DANGER: DIABOLIC 20



STARBURST PRESENTS A PICTORIAL FEATURE ON THE EARLY, COMIC BASED DINO DE LAURENTUS FU M

#### BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS 25

JOHN BROSNAN REVIEWS THE LATEST OFFERING FROM ROGER CORMAN'S NEW WORLD COMPANY.

#### DON'T PANIC 28

THE FIRST HALF OF A TWO PART INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR OF HITCH HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY.

#### THE WIZARD OF OZ 34

THE FIRST IN A NEW SERIES OF STARBURST FANTASY CLASSICS WE LOOK AT THE 1939 MASTERPIECE, THE WIZARD OF OZ.

#### SYBIL DANNING INTERVIEW 41



MIKE MUNN TALKS TO THE VOLUPTUOUS STAR WHO PLAYS ST EXMIN, THE VALKY RIE WARRIORESS IN BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS.

### IT'S ONLY A

JOHN BROSNAN SELECTS HIS NOMINATIONS FOR THE BROZO FILM AWARDS 1980

#### TV ZONE 34

TISE VAHIMAGI ASKS TEN PERTINENT OUESTIONS ABOUT THE SCREENING OF OLD TV SHOWS

#### THE LATHE OF HEAVEN 48



STARBURST LOOKS AT A NEW PRODUCTION FROM AMERICA'S PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEM ... AN ADAPTATION OF URSULA LE GUIN'S LATHE OF HEAVEN.

# THE MAKING OF SUPERMAN II 51



MIKE MUNN TRACES THE GENESIS OF THE SECOND SUPERMAN MOVIE, FROM ITS EARLIEST DEVELOPMENT DAYS TO THE PRESENT.

# STARBURSY LETTERS

#### SOUNDTRACKS )

I em writing to complein at the lack of reference to any personful who have made any real technical break-through in the film medium. The principle baing Dr. R. M. Dolby who developed the Dolby System we see in cassette decks and cinemas, and of late, the stereo system used in conjunction with films like The Empire Strikes Back and Allan.

It is as if all the magazines have decided to ignore the man and his laboratories, therefore, I feel that an interview with him is long overdue. This is because meny readers simply don't know about the system and how it can enhance a film's scene by as much as 50%.

It is almost as if no one knows or cares about Dolby Stereo and feels that it is a waste of time to talk about it, aither that or it will not sell copies, so let's have an interview with him.

The facts speek for themselves As of July 1980:

 More then 2,500 theatres have been equipped with Dolby Sound Systems.

 More than 135 films heve been released with Dolby encoded soundtracks.

 Almost 250 theetres in the United Kingdom heve Dolby System cineme noise reduction units.

 Dolby soundtracks pleyed through a Dolby Stereo processor give reproduction equal to a home Hi-fi unit.

 The mejority of cassette tepes are Dolby encoded for use with the home B type noise reduction.

Starburst simply cannot ignore

W. J. Flanegan, Crowthorne, Berkshire.

#### **SOUNDTRACKS I**

I want to compliment your steff on your fine megazine. I aspecially like the way you cover older movies and tv shows that other magazines tend to overlook. I often find interesting information in your pages long before it appears in your American counterparts' publications. I first started buying your megazine at a local st speciality store but they would get the magazine about two months after it became available in Englend. I have since made a deal with a good friend in your country to mell order the letest issue by air and I now receive them within a few weeks of issue at a price a little cheaper than I.

paid for them at my local store.

I have some information to pass along to Met Irvine. In Starburst 29 in the Starburst 29.

Letters section, Met Strikes Back; Met asked if soundtrecks of Planet of the Apes and Capricorn 1 were issued. They were, and here is what I have found. Planet of the Apes.

Jerry Goldsmith (1968) PR5023SD The Total Sound Inc. 1270 Avenue of the Americas New York, New York 10020. Beneath the Planet of the Apes

Leonerd Rosemen AAS8001
Amoc Records Distributed by Bill
Records Division of Columbia
Pictures Industries 1776 Broadway New York, New York 10019
Capricom 1

Jerry Goldsmith (1978) BSK 3201 Werner Brothers Records Inc. 3300 Warner Blvd. Burbenk, California 91510

3 East 54th Street, New York, Naw York 10022. Even if I do not always agree

even if I do not always agrea with some of your writers opinions in their reviews of certain movies, keep up the good work. It is always good to see other points of view.

> Robert S. Scett, St. Louis, Mo, United States.

### BBC NEWS

Back in Starburst 14 Colin Wise saked if Journey into Space would ever come back. Well it is. Redio 4 are broadcasting a 90 minuted spacial in March. The adventure has been written by Charles Chilton and most of tha original cast have turned up to pley Jet Morgan, Lemmy, Doc and Mitch. Speaking of comebacks Dan Dare will soon be

returning in the form of Jemes Fox. Rodney Bewes will pley Digby and the tv series is set for the wing in engine

For Tolkien fans, the Lord of the Rings will be trensmitted in Merch in a 26 pert serial. For John Maguire there is a Black

Hole story record.

Alistair Streng, Sheulands, Glasgow.

Thanks for the information, Alistair. However, we have to pull you up on one point. Last we heard the Dan Dare tr deal was off. Suspended they tell us. Other than that, nothing. We'll keep you posted!

#### DANA BENEFIT

Starburst 29 was elmost a Dana Gillespie benefit edition! It was greet to discover than an American has taken note of her, despite the rival attractions of his homeland! I hope you will grant Richertos
S. Brunner's with and give hiero
who couldn't make it to your
convention a chence to leave
more about Dans. I also hope his
private fantary becomes public
reality, though I'm not surBritain will do the trick. As you
reported, Japen is moving into it
movies, If the Japenses were catch
sight of Dans Gillespia, they'll go
wild over hart.

Finally. Mr Brunnar's letter was timely, regarding Janny Runners, as a general-movie magazine has just menaged to do an article on her, without reference to any of her si or fentexy films. This wouldn't metter, if it want? for the feet that in a review of Jenny's movie consideration, Mr Brunner's axamples have to be regarded as two of her mejor films! This kind of thing is just one reasonable magazine! Xear Turnbull.

Hebburn, Tyne & Wear.



it.

### STARBURSY LEFTERS

#### **DOCTOR WHO?**

Why keep dragging your feat, guys? You've got to say something about the new Doctor Who sooner or later!

Personally, as much as I like Petra Davison and admire his work, I don't think he can cut it as the good Doctor. The major grouss is ha's too young. Pest respectations have maintained a middle-aged university student (that's the visual concept I fevour. Slacks, college scarl and lacket reminiscent of the belowed Prisoner)! The sad thing about this is that the future of this time-less show could be in isoperdy because of his failure.

I was saddened thet Tom Baker was leaving, miffed at the denartures of K-9 and Romana and angry at the inclusions of the boy and two girl assistants. That's when I was hoping for a return of the Hartnell days, but alas no. Who ever heerd of a twenty nine year old having to have assistants? Jon Partwee fought mostly alona only resorting to at least one helper! No. I have grave forebodings about the future of Doctor Who under John Nathan-Turnar (I hata the new music and introll)

Perhaps I can use these pages to forwerd my choices for new Doctors if indeed. Davison fails.

Firstly Geoffiny (Catweazle-Crowman) Bayldon would have combined the best elements of the Arthell-Troughlon days. Pater (Onedin Line) Gilmore would make a woshabecking Dector a is Partwee and must be looking for another long running vehile. Everyona's fevourite actihere, Paul Darrow would make a fine, anigment Time Lord (noticed how the Beet's drepging its feat on a new Black's 70

Then we have actors who might be harder to talk into might be harder to talk into accepting the role, John (Dr Guist of Dommwesth) Paul would give Who an authoritarian look again or how about Gerald (Adam Adamant) Harper? He must be confined to theter work now Radio Capitol have finished his show, basides withich we should see more of him! Finally the killer! Andrew (a rand Gustermess!) Keir, think what he could do with the role Six faces!

would willingly wish to materialise out of the regeneration instead of Trisram.

Frankly, I think all this change on the show is merely to get a wider audience in the States where the Pertwee shows are mildly successful, if not fully syndicated.

Still you are innocent until proven guilty in this fair country of ours to I'll bits my tongue end see how the new Doctor shapes up, after all I'va been saying no one alse could play. Who aver since William Hernell went cometose to become Partick Troughton. We've not been lat down yat, so keep the faith TARDIS famil. Still I'd be interested to know what fallow Starbursters think of my alternate.

Bill Scully, Birkenhead, Merseyside.

Any one interested in extensive coverage of the Doctor Who phenomenon should pick up a copy of our sister publication, Doctor Who Monthly, brought to you by the same editrial team as Starburst and available where you bought this magazine. End of commerciall

#### FLASH? UH, UH!

I have just been to see Flash Gordon. What has all the critical fuss been about? To read the reports of these professional experts you'd have thought it was that greatest thing since siled bread. One report even said thetit was better than all the other spece films put together! Huhl! I never thought I would agree with John Brosnan whole-heartedly on any of his criticisms but myo-thmy how right he is about Flash Gordon.

To me, it seems thet a good fillm should hew some sense of realism — something, at least to identify with, to care about, to marvel at. This filln had nothing — I couldn't quite honestly have cared whether fleah and his pels seved the Earth or not, or even remembered any more of those dreadful lines or not. (Come to think of it, I don't think they did sither).

How, therefore, it can be



considered equal or batter to Cless Encountar (the best mindboggler) or ST — TMP [trill the great thought provoker) or Alian (the film that I found myself most caring about the characters in) is beyond my understanding. And although I must applicagatically edmit to not heiring seen them (I was alse cleims-goes taterer) am sure that Star Wars, Supprema and 2001 rise far above the medicicity that was Flash Gordon.

Also a lot of criticism was aimed at the 40 million dollars spent on ST — TMPI At least for its money you could see special affects etc thet looked professionally done end not cut out of cereal packets!

ceres piech cui sest I have hed difficulty in understanding difficulty in understanding exactly what it was I liked about ST ' both film and by series. Now I know. It's something I can believe in and hope for in the future, from its cheracters, its ideals and its reliefly —ell lacking in Flesh Gorden! All I can hope is that if (plessel) there is a Star Trek sequel, the critics will still have those rose-intied glasses on that they must have taken to west-frish Gorden!

Linda Miles (Mrs), Strumpshaw, Nr Norwich.

#### OBITUARY

I am writing to inform you of the great loss of Britain's lergest Star Trek fan club.

For the last five years the club (run by Miss Tracy Cooka) has given its members a warm and friendly, while afficient service. Tha club is only dosing now because its membership has overwhelmed the facilities at Tracy's house and they can't keap up.

I wish to thenk Trecy and har helpers for the five years of hard stog, and emusing and informative newsletters end I am sure the 537 fens of Star Trek and Space 1999 egree with me.

Tracy's spirit proves that Star Trak will never die. Adrian Thomas,

Adrian Thomes, Hartham Park,

Additional results by Marvel Cornex Ltd., Jackson Results, 2021.11 Accident Tomas Ltd., Jackson Results, 2022.11 Accident Tomas Louding, NVIS. All phonographic materials in the Control of the Control of the Control of the Ltd., Calumba, Marvel Results, Rammer Bons, 174. Calumba, Marvel Results, Rammer Bons, 1757. Inches Control of the Control of the 1757. Inches Control of the Control of 1757. Inches Control of the 1757. Inches Control of the 1757. Inches Control of the 1757. Inches Control of 17

#### RUSSELL'S TRIUMPH

Do you Ken Russell? If so tha naws is good; very good. His Altered States science fiction dreme is a smash-hit and not another Mike Ciming's Heaven's Gata catastrophe after all. For some months (indeed years) the rumnurs about this film had been dire and dark. The first director. Arthur Penn, quit the project in 1978. Leter on, special effects man John Dykstra also exitted. Then the budget grew so large. Columbia Pictures threw in the towel - and Warner Brothers came to the rescue. Ken Russell was signed as director - and soon after he started work in his typical bravura style, the film's Paddy writer (Natwork) Chavefsky took his name off the film credits. Rumours grew apace about both Russell and the film rushing out of control, too much money and nudity involved, and then Warners changed its mind ebout the opening dates . . .

Well, we - and Russell - can now relax, Altered States, however much Chavefsky has been altered by Russell, is a resounding success and tipped to pick up a brece of Dscars, if not more, on March 30. Time Magazine chose it as one of its ten films of 1980, "e daft, cagey combustion of ideas and styles, producing a fantasy of delirium and delight". Time's new critic Richard Cortiss sees it as an anthology and apothaosis both of American pop movies like Frankenstein, Murder in the Rue Morgua, Alien, Love Story, The Nutty Professor and 20011

 in Marshall Brickman's Simon — only to far more devastating effect. Hurt hallucinates back to his birth, and indeed, beyond it ... to the days of primitive man, chenging into a siminaryle creature with the help of Dick Smith's make-up on the agile figure of Miguel Godreau.

Too broad an opus to encapsulate here (wait for John Brosnen's review), he always gets the best films to coverl). Altered States is a must-see movie. An ecid-trip of a film, and important for the future of our favourite genne, in that it advances the already and too swiftly hackneyed sepects of what usually passes for science fiction on today's screen.

Don't be put off the film because Peddy Chayefsky took his name off the credits. Ha's been rether half-haarted about that, anyway. His chosen credit of Sidney Aaron is, in fact, his given prenoms; and his script credit still saws, based on a book by Paddy Chavefskyl Ken Russall has his cast (or Penn's: including heauteous Blair Brown as Hurt's enthropologist wife; and Bob Balaban, Truffaut's interpreter in CE3K) whip through Chavefsky's typically wordy text at breakneck speed, to allow Russell - also typically - to dazzle us with his visuals.

This is Russell's Hollywood debut (his first movie since the disastrous Valentino in 1977, not counting his London Weekend TV-film of Clouds of Glory in 1978) and he's likely to maintain a good career over there, if he continues to display such an unusuel (for him) control of both his thespiens end pyrotechnics. Russell is always at his best with a strong-willed producer behind him and with Altered States, he's naver been better. He has an interesting new composer for tha film's atonal score, too, in John Coriglieno.

Special effects, by the way, ware under Chuck Gaspar's control, with Brian Ferren in charge of visuals, and the opticals left to Robbie Blalack and Jamie Shrout, and the effective time-lapse photography by Lou

Schwartzberg, I think you'll find thay'll beat any of the Superman, Flash Gordon, Star Trek or Black Hola people to the Oscars this year.

#### TRUMBULL'S SCAN

If there's anyone capabla of outdazzling Russell, thet will be Douglas Trumbull, It has now been confirmed that his first film as a director since Silent Running nearly ten years ago will be shot in his long-developed secret process, Show-Scen. The film in question is MGM's 16-million dollar Brainstorm, also long developed by Trumbull . . . ovar the past five years or so. Show-Scan is what Paramount loved to call Futurex - "a horrible nama, I heta it" said Trumbull, when outlining his invention in my interview with him way, but way, back in Starburst 7 ... 1978 that wast

That's whan he also explained that his 70mm process is simply photographing and projecting at 60 frames per second rather than 24. "It creates a greatly anhanced illusion of reality, over and above any kind of film you've ever seen. We use high-speed cameras, we've



Douglas Trumbull

developed high-speed projectors, and anomasily hug screen, and anomasily hug screen, it really becomes a subjective exparience for the eudiance. Very much like a concert experience. You feel what you're seeing, whet is occurring on the screen is happening to you. Live. ... set that time. An unbalievably penetrating experience. When we tipped the camere over — people have just rolled out of thair seath!"

At the time of that interview, Trumbull thought he had lost the Brainstorm title (producer Sandy Howard had announced such a film, but since his Meteor disaster, among others, Sandy's plans have been cut back) Brainstorm is back then with Doug and very suitably too - it sounds the perfact description of his new process. The film is not science fiction, although like Altered States it does apparently concern scientific research going awry. "It's about the realm of the human mind and what may go on there." Trumbull told us before. "The content of the film and the actual experience of the eudience are very tightly interwoven. What happens is that the process is a very subjective exparience for tha audience. They are no longer watching other people react to one another in a story, per se. They are participants in it, And so the structure and design of the way the film is shot and conceived has to do with making the audience part of it. People will be highly affected by it."

I'va yat to laam why Paremount, which backed most of Trumbull's experimentation with Show-Scan has let him take it and his movie to MGM. It could be connected with the fact that in 1978, he did admit that few cinemas could show his film without new projection equipment, new screens - new theatres in fact! That would maan the most expansive movie of the year. Chances are that Trumbull has now modified his process to enable normal cinemas to project it . . . time will tell. Brainstorm only starts shooting in June in a North Carolina area known as the Research Triangle, near Ralaigh,

#### CONAN'S WENCH

We've been waiting long enough for Conan to roll, end now thet John Milius has got cracking with the camera, there is extre special good news for all lovers of fantasy women Arnold Schwarzenegger has a wondrous lady for his barbaric adventures. Her name is Sandehl Bergman. The name may not meen much at first mention the frame will. She was the stendout dancer in Rob Fosse's All That Jazz and turned up in Yanadu as well Still no one saw her in that! But those who did catch her fleetingly topless act in Jazz have not forgotten her in a hurry. The muscle-bound Amie will have to be not just good but very good to avoid having Conan stolen book line and bra-strep by the succulent Sandahl.

#### UP-GRADED

If at first you don't succeed, att.
and so something big is stirring within Lord Lew Grade's troubled movie combine. It's sclence fiction. And it's likely to be his lordship's most expensive gemble in order to best his outfit's st jinx. After the dismal Saturn 3, and the almighty flop of the 40-million doller Raise The Titanic. Lord Lew would appear

to have learned one vital lesson at least. He's bringing in experts to meke Dark Crystal ... producers Gary Kurtz and Jim Henson. What do you meen — who'r Kurtz is George Lucas' producer on both the Star Wars films so far, and Henson is the creator and producer of The Muppers (the only TV show and movie to keep Grade alivel)

A lot depends on Kurtz and Henson, Lord Lew's Associated



Gary Kurtz, producer of the highly successful Star Wars film series, now working with king of the Muppets, Jim Henson, on the Lew Grade offering Dark Crystal.

Communications Corporation suffered heavy losses last year hardly surprising, considering the tv-movie-like bilge it continues tochum out. At one time, the

chum out. At one time, the company is alleged to have owed as much as 180-million dollars to US and UK banks. Now a new three-man committee has been set up to watch the economics of ACC. Lord Lew insists, however, that he still retains the last word is that the still retains the last word. And the last word is that Dark Crystal will be made ... whatwer the cost. Shooting is slated to beein in April Watch this space.

#### ENTER: THE FRENCH

Christmas is coming (oh yes it is ... vet again) and in keeping with the recent Yuletide openings of sf blockbusters in recent years, that's when the French finally enter the super-fantasy game. Although by December, Mayday will probably be called something else . . . Costing a mere million dollars. Mayday is the first French of film of the '80s (indeed the first real of movie for some decades from France). And it has an intriguing pedigree. Written and directed by Chantal Goult, in. as they say, the spirit of Jules Verne and William Hodgson, it has technical advice from Charles Berlitz, the international specialist in the Bermuda Triangle mysterias, and several months of special effects, many of which will be shot underwater by Jacques Cousteau's team.

It's also the debut project from the new Bite Island Productions of Paris – a company headed up by Chantal Goult and Alain Schleckoff, one of the brothers who has been running the Paris Science Fiction and Fentary Festival for the last ten years. So yes, it's about time he made a movie for his own festival; indeed, it's also about time that France, the country of Verme and Melika, re-entered the science fiction film business.

Shooting begins in April, and last four weeks in Paris and Brittany, plus an extra week at Fort Lauderdale in Florida and New York, Not much more I can reveal at the moment however Chantal and Alain are keeping the scenario close to their chest except for admitting that it takes place mostly on one of the Britanny islands, where a couple of tourists are suddenly cut off the world and up to their cameras and tent-poles in chases, murders. and adventures all of a kind which should assure Mayday of being among the movies at this year's 11th Paris of end fantasy festival. before opening officially in December.

It looks as though Conan might well have a rival much closer to home. Our home, Our Garth, in fect. After appearing for years in the Daily Mirror with only the occasional media mention when he's ten, 15, or whatever it is yeers old, Garth is beginning to loom lerge as a movie project. And why ever not after Superman, Batman, Spider-Man, Tha Flash Hulk, Buck Rogers, Gordon. Wonder Woman, Berberella, Popeye, Dan Dare (well, Dan's been grounded for a year but it's still AOK for his ty series with Jemes Fox in the helmet). Tarry and the Pirates. Mandrake, even Little Drphan Annia, and now the French Gaston La Gaffa as well, isn't it about time a British super-hero

made it into movies? Answers on a postcard, please...no..! Well, yes, if you want to, even more so if you want to name who should play Garth.

For the moment the plan seems to be offering the led to heavyweight boxer Joe Bugner, who has been diabiling in Italian speghetii Westerns, and is bland, and big, and tough enough. I think Dave Prowse might be better myself . . apart from his yokel accent. Neither Joe no Dave could prove to be as wooden as Sam J. Jones Sam J. Jo

For the record, Garth has been running in the Mirror since 1935, in fact and is syndicated throughout the world, so there's no thought of this fellow merely being known to Britain.

A UK CONAN?



Garth copyright Mirror Newspapers

#### AVFRAGE RUNGETS

Difficult to keep up with the heavy inflation in movie-making. Only recently I was spotlogishing for saying the werage Hollywood budget was about 8-million dollars now that the werage has shot up to 10-million dollars. Now I hear from the chairman of 20th Century-Fox (the Star Wars and Alien distribution) that the warreps budget will hit double that by 1985 – 25-million dollars no less!

Dannis C, Stanfill arrives at this frightening figure this way, if today's 10-million dollar average movie costs a turther S.5-million to publicite, etc., the forthcoming 14-million of lost average budget will cost a further 11-million to market. "That's a 25-million dollar debt on one film, he says, "and that's enough to make aven the strongest man trembla." Incleded it is, Faw average films earn that kind of money worldwide.

And television is not going to be any help any more. The big three American networks are beginning to fight shy of paying axorhitant sums to secure movies for their chennels - only to see them wiped out of the retings when J.R. is shot, or Mary Crosby tells ell . . . or indeed, when a better film is available on cablevision, or viewers choose their own movie to run at home on cassette. The natworks are finally realising that it's cheaper to make their own movies, or series, unless there's a chence of buying up e sure-fire winner of the box and they appear to be any starring Clint Eastwood or Burt Reynolds.

This back-padelling by the networks (in America only, BBC and ITV are still flighting like mad to buy films for British by is noted led bed news, of course. It means, in the long run, that American televizion will be forced into making better to shows ... and about time too. Same goes for movies, if they're going to cost as much as 25-million a throw. The shape of things to come, therefore, could be better—more professional and less amateur night in Dixie and

And the key film in ell this should be Trumbull's Brainstorm. For as he admitted in 1978, it is created for cinemas only. "If it were shown on a normal screen or no television, video or something, it might not even work." Ahal

#### THRESHOLD

Despite the kind of budgets involved and the various block-buster. flops, Hollywood's love affair with sit has not yet about A new company, Ariel Communications, starts production on a 12-million number, Thresheld, in the summer, with foreign as the summer, with foreign as flow officially described as an fit's officially described as an fit's stare, in fact.

Ariel is being run by a quertet. two film-makers, a lewyer and a financial man, Arthur Stanley Katz is the lawyer, an international attorney in fact; who has worked for both MGM and Werner Brothers: Don Marino. handles the cash. The couple with film experience (which does tend to help new combines!) are producer Bert Gold, whose nema I must edmit means absolutely nothing to me, sorry about that Bert . . . and producer-director Alex Singer, who made one of my favourite Hollywood movies of the early 60s: A Cold Wind in August. His other movies include Psycha '59 (which ceme out in '64, just to confuse everyone), and pot-boilers like Love Has Many Faces (1965 yewn, yawn) and Cantain Anacha (1971). Alex has been busier in television of lete, handling various of the top shows - notably Los Grant.

#### 1984 IS COMING

1984 is coming. Both the yeer and a new movie of the George Orwell book. Indeed, the two events should collide. Chicego lewyer Marvin Rosenbloom has bought an 18-month option on the film rights from Orwell's widow and aims to have cemented a film deal, and indeed to have

1984 on release within two years. Rosenbloom has been connected with the showbusiness world before, representing verious ertists and, so he says, arrenging verious severel peckege deels for movies. He's a great fan of the Orwell book and so cartainly isn't about to temper with such a classic. except in suggesting, quite naturally with three years to go. that the novel's futuristic tone is herdly necessary enymore. Orwell could not have been more prophetic, he feels. "When he died in 1950, there was no twoway ty computers were in their infancy and no President had ever bugged the White House," comments Rosenbloom. He is telking with "two mejor

He is teking with two mejor directors." but we should realise that the book or rether the title, is less of a classic to Americans and Hollywood than it is to the SHILLIN, he had the memoreble BBC-to pley version, heedlining in 1954 Gusch a classic that Leslie Halliwell does not mention it in his Teleguide, not even in his three lines (I) on Pater Cushingly, while Americans

only ever saw the turgid movie version starring Edmund O'Brian in 1956. The thought of 1984 being made with Reagan in the White House is almost too close for comfort...



Peter Cushing in 1957.





#### GALAXINA LIVES

With the kind of reticance and feelings for good tasts not usually associated with any Hollywood company, much lass a small-time outfit greatly in need of winning it invastment, Galaxina has been re-issuad vary successfully in America. The film, you will recall. opened on the day after its star. the heautiful Dorothy R Stratten was found shot to death by har husband. Early business was obviously connected with the gorey haadlines, and producar Marilyn J. Tanser was powerless to pull the film out of cinama deals immediately. She stopped the release as soon as she could. and once the headlines, hot gossip and choice rumours abatad, she has started her release plane anew Latast financial report is 748 210 dollars in ten days in Southern California alone.



#### LINDA'S BACK

The youngsters still go for the Gothicks too. In fact, some of tham, like poor Linda Blair, can't get away from tham, With har puppyfat long gona, and her head no longer turning 360 dagrees, Linda has the top role in Irwin Yablans' latest horror quickie, Hall Night, with a supporting cast of absolutely no one you've ever heard of or are likely to in the future Yahlans of course is the real eter of his project. He's the producer who talked a certain John Carpantar into making Hallowean, and he's hoping lightning strikes twice His director this time is Tom De Simona The Californian locations are in a place called Radlands . . . and thay probably will be by the tima Yablans has finished pouring out the ketchun



With more of that usual Hollywood bed, tate, MGMTV is planning a Dorothy biopic, The Dorothy Stratten Story. The movie will be made by Wilcox Procutions, the company headed by CHIPs star Learny Wilcox. He's also the fallow praparing a Matro movie on, wouldn't you know it, The Yorkshire Ripper. See what starring in CHIPs does for you!

#### SUPFR DEAL

Christopher Reeve is doing very nicaly thank you with his Broadway stage dabut, The Fifth of July. Audiences love seeing Sunie in the flash (and minus his blue combinations), and tha release of Superman II has greatly increased business at the 1 153 seater New Apollo Theatre. Chris collects 71/2% of the weakly grosses (or a quaranteed 5 000 dollars) and is booked in the play until March 1, if you're planning a New York trip. Ha might stay longer (and than collect 10% of the taka), although he has a new film being prepared for Coppola's company, and the West German director. Wim Wandars. - Trap Door.

Chances are, if the play's still hot, Raere will be succeeded by the actor who actually created the role of the impotent, gay, Vistnam war eteran back in the 7178 off-Broadway season. He was a nobody when Chris Reeve took the play to Broadway on November's Letver, but William Hurt is a big new film name himself since the critically and publicly applauded opening of Attered States.



#### SUPER TAKE

Superman II is coining it hugely in Amarica and Australia since its Christmas opanings there. Not quita so hot in France though, whan two local comedies forced it into third place in the Paris top ten. Ah but than, Chris Reeve is only saving the world . . . while one of the comedies, Inspector Blunder (vat another film deriving from a strip cartoon) stars the comic. Colucha, who is standing in the French Presidential elactions in March. You just can't beat that kind of national publicity, as Ronald Raagan provedl

#### **OUICK TAKES**

Ray Bradbury chosan to deliver

the first George Pal Lacture at the home of the Oscars, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciancas . . . Klaus Kinski dua down-under in New Zeeland for Daad Kids, with Louise Fletchar and Michel Murphy, for the Patrick and Harlaguin producer. Tony Ginnana . . . Suparman Junior (Jeff East) flying into Daadly Blessing in Dallas with Ernie Borgnina and Battlestar Galactica's Maren Jensen . . . Flash Gordon's best valua for money, Juscious Ornella Muti. into Cocaine - the film that is, by Wast German wunderkind Rainer Werner Fassbinder . . . Dario Argento (and Woody favourite. Jassica Harpar, wins the Gemma Gravan role of tha wife of Hollywood's version of Dannis Potter's wondrous tele-sarias Pannies From Heaven . . . Both BBC and ITV refused chances to buy Alian for the box; looks lika you'll hafta buy it for yourselves; same goes for Apecalypsa Now

... Richard Thomas, from Battle Beyond Tha Stars, shooting a Berlin Wall thriller in Wast Germany, Berlin Tunnel 21...



JOHN SAXON and GEORGE PEPPARD as Cowboy Co-starring DARLANNE FLUEGEL'SYBIL DANNING
Music Composed by JAMES HORNER Screenplay by JOHN SAYLES story by JOHN SAYLES and ANNE DYER
Executive Producer ROGER CORMAN Producer ED CARLIN Directed by JIMMY T. MURAKAMI

SHOWING IN THE WEST END FROM THURSDAY FEB.19 AND ALL OVER LONDON FROM SUNDAY FEB. 22 his is Tokyo's greatest fear ...
San Francisco's, too, of course.
The all-shatering earthquake that will send the whole community up in smoke, down in ruins. Turn it into the biggest parking lot in the East. In short: Welcome to the grandfather of all 'quakes.

We have enough of earthquakes for real last year. But they weren't urban. It still doesn't lessen the grief, the loss of life and the building up all over again.

As in most things these days, it's the poor who get the worst of it. Apart from the movies, we've yet to see a quake sunder a modern metropolis, the crowded streets, the highways, buyways and subways. When that happens — and it will, it's just a matter of time — the result will be catastrophic.

If villages in Southern Italy didn't stand a chance against the ravages of nature, how do you think Tokyo, one of the most crowded cities in the world, would manage? It couldn't!

We have no answer for eathquakes. Roy Scheider and his gun can't quell them like he did Jaws and Co. Air force jets can't bring it to heel, like King Kong. And Superman just sin't around (although he sent his deptuy, Charlton Heston, to do his best with the Hollywood version). There's nothing to do with a quake other than ... quake!

Earthquake 7.9 is Tokyo's nightmare on film . . . And it's ghastly!

Kaneto Shindo, no mean director himself – remembers The Children of Hiroshima (1952); and best of all, Onlabas (1964) – supplies the script. The drama is on a huge scale, brickabas for Japanese politicians; the rest is written with Western eyes in mind, supplying the all-important women in peril following the slow-footed authorities doing little or nothing about the scientifically prophesied cataclysm. (In this film, the Japanese premier is related to the Jawamsnayor, Murray Hamilton).

Kenjiro Ohmori directs and has a bunch of people with strange-sounding names and faces (they take rather more memorising than Heston) act out the drama. Dersonal and epic.

But in the end, it's the special effects crew who take most of the honours. Led by Teruyoshi Nakano, they built, painted and manipulated the mattes and the models and bring the whole pack of cards down in an almighty swirl of savagery for the cameras.

Toho International foots the bill – but will have to think again about that title in order to sell this one abroad. Earthquake 7.9 presumably means the register of the inevitable Richter scale. Instead, it reads more like a movie made in 1979, released in Japan in 1980, and ready for the world in 1981. If it ever comes your way, expect it to be so called – Earthquake 81, why not.



Expect scenarist Shindo, director Ohmori and Toho may want to earn the odd buck or two by warning their fellow countrymen with such a tale – but they don't dare put a date on it. Superstitious, perhaps. The quake takes place, shall we say . . . tomorrow . . . .

If quakes can't be stopped, then at least they can be scientifically predicted. Or so we're told. (Don't try to tell them that in southern Italy). But in reality, there are such groups monitoring the primary and secondary vibrations of the rocks in the seth's crust. In this piece of (hopefully) science-fiction, they're dumb enough to disregard all warning signs.

Our hero, Yoichi by name (he'll

probably be Jack or Hank in the dubbed version!) is a member of such a seismo-graphic group. He notes certain alterations from the norm in a deep well's inclination guage (hardly as trustworthy as California's famous San Andreas Fault, but no matter). He says it's all about to happen. Doomsday is around the next vibrating corner, chaps.

Ha, say the chaps. Or indeed, Ah sol Well, of course, he's young, is Yoichi, not yet grey of hair or mind, and it is the elders of Japan who pull the strings. So go home, kid, see you next week . . .

Yoichi's wife, Yuko, is rather more inclined to believe him. She comes from such stock, the daughter of the geophy-





sicist who predicted Tokyo's massive 1923 earthquake. Mother-in-law is not so sure. Lightning, she feels, could hardly strike twice in the same family. Besides, if Yoichi's wrong, he'd sully her dead husband's good name, make him lose historical face.

Yoichi, who's obviously been seeing all the right films, is not to be stopped. He decides to pass his warnings to the top. To the very top. He has the Premier's ear. . But too late. As the old politico has to admit, even if Yoichi's right, there's no time. Politicians can always plan their next election campaign, but emergencies—why they take committee and

committees take time to be formed, let

alone meet and .

Scenarist Shindo, of course, also has to give such sub-plot of 50s banality. Boy meets girl, loses girl, geets another girl, nearly loses girl, geets to meet both girls bingol It's the women in perll syndrome. Yuko, the wife, drops hubby, and wants a quick divorce, on mum's orders, since he took no notice of her and went to the Premier. This is good news for our hero's pert assistant, Tomiko — the light in her eyes proves not to be the reflection of the rising sun, but love. Bad news for her boyfriend, a hothoth news reporter.

So now we have four young people to fret about come the fateful hour, and as by now we're well into, if not past, the first fate-filled hour, we know doomsday can't be far off. It isn't.

But how to get our quartet together? Mr. Shindo has thought of everything. Before divorcing hubby, the wife wants to meet his new girl, to well, make sure he'll be well looked after, have his meals hot and socks clean in the future, I suppose. So we have Yuko and Yoichi en route to Tomiko's pad by tube. And we have our reporter (never did carch his name) rushing by car to the same flat to talk Tomiko out of dropping him. Peyton Plaze Eart is what it is!

These journeys are being made at 3.30pm on May 15, 19XX — that's what it says here. And that's when the Richter needle hits 7.9 and metropolis caves in at the seams.

The Earth coughs, vibrates, trembles — and quakes, Buildings topple. Bridges twist and shake and give way. Factories explode. Tokyo erupts. Apocalypse is now. The end of the world is nigh no more — it's what's happening! Millions of people, and there are so many millions in

Tokyo, are crushed, burnt, trapped, suffocated, electrocuted, dismembered or just plain killed.

Vicihi and Yuko are snared in the subway filling fast with water from a plumber's nightmare of burst pipes, mains, rivers, and dams. Yoichi saves her and others, but he can't save himself. The reporter, anonymous to the end (in my notebook, at least) saves Tomiko. Rains save the fires. Nothing can save Tokyo

save the fires. Nothing can save Tokyo
... flat as a pancake on its Honshu island.
Devastated!
As dawn rises on May 16, 19XX,

Footnote: I freely admit I may have the names muddled for our heroines. Miss Nagashima may well be Tomiko, and Yumi Tagiqawa the wife. Instinct, rather any a proper cast-list, makes me think otherwise. Either way, the delightfully named Yumi Takiqawa has sort of been here before. She popped up recently among the sole survivors of Earth itself in Virus. Just not her year is it.



Hiroshi Katsuno (is Yoichi), Toshiyuki Nagashima (Yuko), Yumi Takigawa (Tomiko), Kayo Matsuo (Faporteri), Directed by Kanjiro Ohmori, Screenplay by Naketo Shindo, Photography by Rokuro Nishigaki, Takashi Yamamoto, Music by Toshiski Tsashima, Special Effects by Teruyoshi Nakeno, Art direction by Iwao Akuna, Yasuki Inoue, Executive Producer

Tomoyuki Tanaka. A Toho production (Japan). Colour 102 minutes.



Romero's Zombies it, the started financially successful Friday the 13th. continued the trend and now Charles Kaufman's film Mother's Day looks like opening the floodgates. Or should that be bloodgates, because a new wave of goresoaked splatter movies is about to begin, with a vengeance. Films like Blood Feast (1963) and Mark of the Devil (1970) started similar crazes for this type of film, but they were false starts. It needed a George Romero to release his film with a self-imposed American X rating (meaning only people over 21 could see it) to usher in an audience who knew they would never see this sort of film on their television screens only a year later. Producers all over the world could see the financial rewards which is why we have witnessed the recent glut of Halloween type movies. Actress Caroline Munro's Maniac and director Eric Weston's Evil-

release which means this particular wave of gore movie has an instant

back up ready to follow. Anyway, back to Mother's Day which is similar to The Hills Have Eyes as it is based on an actual occurrence experienced by the director. In college Kaufman had developed a close friendship once they had graduated, they made a yow to spend all their vacations together every year. One particular year they chose a camping holiday it was on the first night that they began to realise they were being observed by a person or persons unknown. Kaufman admits to a terrifyingly sleepless night with a mad dash to a motel early the next morning. It is this occurrence, taken to its logical horrific extreme that is the central idea of Mother's Day. Kaufman changes the sex of his campers, puts three college girls. (Nancy Hendrickson) Abbey Jackie (Deborah Luce) and Trina (Tiana Pierce) through

For those of you tired with the cycle of films, here's one in where Review by

# MOTHE

Below left: Abbey (Nancy Hendrickson) wield a television set with deadly feracity. Below: Trina (Tiana Pierce) makes a break for freedom, weighed down by her dying friend



nad axeman kills young girls" young girls kill mad axemen. an Jones.

# S DAY

Jackie (Deborah Luce), Below right: An earlier victim of the two maniecs, Ike (Holden McGulre) and Addley (Billy Ray McGunde), meetr a girly end by the observers lke (Holden McGuire) and Addley (Billy Ray McQuade), two subnormal psychopaths who are ruled by the iron hand of their mother (Rose Ross). Mother is terrified by the prospect of an attack by her savage sister Queenie who she is convinced lurks in the woods, and has trained her two sons in all forms of combat using their kidnap victims in staged muggings or rapes, so she can advise them on their tactical errors. Jackie is forced to participate in one of their "games" and as a result dies a very slow death.

Ånyone who really does believe the ludicrous theory that films showing the supposed glorification of man's inhumanity to woman do deprave and corrupt can take heart in the fact that here, Trina and Abbey escape and fight back with a vengeance. This type of film never uses the common or garden axe or knife, although they are very much in evidence here — it's more bizarre and inventive weapons that feature

as the murder instruments. Here, for example Trina and Abbey use a radio aeriel, an electric meat carver, a can of Drano sink cleaner and, would you believe — a tv set!

Mother's Day is as absurd and horrific as an E.C. comic story from Tales from the Crypt or The Vault of Horror, It's over-the-top gore is quite laughable and the film itself is saved from being condemned as trash exploitation by the many subtleties, like the Deliverance in-joke, and the finer points of the cleverly worked-out plot. There are the usual lapses in logic which is becoming the biggest common factor in horror films today, but the hilarious twist end redeems all that has gone before it. Mother's Day is a cheap film made on location in New Jersey. It is offensive, objectionable, bloody and has no socially redeeming feature whatsoever, but its knowing sense of the ridiculous and its raw energy make it, paradoxically, a film to see and enjoy











women who read Barbara Cartland etc: the same people who made Richard Matheson's weepy novel Bid Time Return a success - are not the same people who go to the cinema these days. Cinemagoers today are young and slightly cynical - Han Solo telling Princess Leia that he thinks she's keen is about as heavy a romantic scene they'd be willing to Two hours of watching accent Christopher Reeve pining over Jane Seymour is just too much to swallow. Show the movie on afternoon tv, however, and you'd have millions of housewives weeping into their cups of tea. Okay, we've established that Some-

where in Time failed because it wasn't able to reach the audience it was aimed at but how does it rate as a piece of filmmaking? Not bad. I must admit, Jeannot Szwarc, the director (Extreme Close-up. Bug, Jaws II) successfully creates and maintains the all-important, otherworldly mood of the picture which helps one to accept the incredible events. All the 1912 sequences are bathed in a golden glow that suggests the past was indeed a better place to live in, an impression aided by keeping the 1912 action restricted to a luxury hotel (the 90 year old Grand Hotel on the resort island of Mackinac in Michigan) where it's easy to present only the advantages of living in that time and none of the disadvantages. But one shouldn't quibble about that because, after all, the movie is supposed to be a pure and simple fantasy.

The sequences that didn't work for me were the early ones set in the present day. I just couldn't accept Christopher Reeve as a playwright - people who spend all day, and night, at the typewriter tend to be flabby, unhealthy-looking characters with bad posture (I'm basing this observation on first-hand experience) whereas he looked as if he spent too much time in the gymnasium to ever get down to any serious writing. It's easier to accept him once he goes back to 1912 because he's supposed to be an anachronism there someone in the wrong time and place but even then he didn't quite work. The problem, of course, is Superman, By successfully playing a super-human he's turned himself into a kind of freak and it's going to be very difficult for him, as an actor, to shake off the Superman image (Sean Connery had the same problem with James Bond), He's convinced audiences he can portray an extraordinary character, now he's got to convince them he can be ordinary too.

Jane Seymour, as the object of his desire, is more successful though she's not an actress I particularly admire. She does at least suggest she belongs to the world of 1912, an achievement probably due to being an English-trained actress. I doubt if many of the current crop of young American actresses could have fitted into the period so easily.

Both Seymour and Reeve work hard, and skilfully (though some of Reeve's bits of comedy business are a little to cute) to persuade us there is some kind of cosmic attraction between the two characters that can transcend reality but they don't quite succeed. Actually I found the intertime love affair between Malcolm McDowell and Mary Steenburgen in Time After Time much more convincing and even genuinely touching (they did such a good job they even convinced themselves and have since got married).

But Time After Time, for all its romantic and fantasy content, was definitely a film of its time, hard-edged and slightly cynical, whereas Somewhere In Time, like its central character, is out of its proper time and place. It's an interesting experiment, and a brave one. but one that was doomed to fail in 1981.

#### Somewhere in Time (1981)

Christopher Reeve (as Richard Collier), Jane Seymour (Elise McKenne), Christopher Plummer (W.F. Robinson), Teresa Wright (Laure Roberts), Bill Erwin (Arthur), George Voskovec (Doctor Gereld Finney). Susan French (Older Elise), John Alvin (Arthur's fether), Eddra Gale (Genevieve), Seen Hayden (Young Arthur).

Directed by Jeannot Szwarc, Screenplay by Richard Matheson based on his novel Bid Time Return, Director of Phototoraphy Isidore Mankofsky, Production Design by Seymour Klate, Edited by Jeff Gourson, Music composed and conducted by John Barry, Costumes by Jean-Pierre Dorleac, Sound by Charles L. King III, Associate Producer Steven Bickle, Produced by Stephen Deutch.

Time: 104 Cert: /

# STARBURSI COMPETITION RESULTS

At last! The results of the Starburst Sweat Shirt Competition which appeared in Starburst 28 (any one here remember that far back?) By now, of course, all the lucky winners will have received their prizes -- so if your name is printed here and you don't have a sweat

shirt, start worrying!

Some of the tie breaker slogens (I read Starburst because . . .) were witty and well thought out. After many sleepless nights sorting out the entries into the three categories (small, medium and large) we had many happy hours reading through all your witty answers. One gentleman said he read Starburst as it was cheaper than Playboy. Hmml Or how about the competitor who read Starburst because it really knows where its towel is?

Finally, just in case there are a few of you out there still puzzled by the three questions (though not one entry got the answers wrong!) your replies should have read:

- a) The still is from THX 1138
- b) The director is George Lucas.
  c) He is better know for the Star
- Wars series of films.



# COMPETION WINNERS

Robert Rimmer, Southport, Merseyside. Simon Beaumont, Pembridge, Hertfordshire.

Mark Chadwick, Eaton Park, Stoke-on-Trent.

Michael Cheesley, Teighmouth, Devon. Timothy Leech, Whittlesey,

Peterborough.
Martin East, Wistaston, Crewe.
David Pennington, Marlow, Bucks.
Paul King, Sidcup, Kent.
Joe Fordham, Gidea Park, Romford.
Gregory Allan Hughes, Allerton,

Liverpool. G. Evelin, Corringham, Essex. P, Winstone, Bedminster, Bristol. Philip Alley, Sandiway, Northwich. J.K. Marston, Ferndowne, Wimbourne. Terence Mustoo, Upminster, Essex. M.G.E. Carter, Oundle, Northants. James Buck, Aylesbury, Bucks. Chris Fishburn, Leeds, Yorkshire. Fiona Rule, Renfrew, Scotland. Alan Parry, Edinburgh, Scotalnd. T. Oakley, Wellingborough, Northants. J.R. Spencer, Styvechale, Coventry. G. Skinder, Goole, Yorkshire. Robin Yellow, Rugby, Warks. Jonathon Llewellyn, Totnes, Devon. Roger P. Birchall, Chester, Cheshire. R.M.R. Scannell, Knowle, Solihull. Adrian Clarke, Sevenoaks, Kent. Louise Muston, Cleethorpes, Lincs. Chris Munsey, Barwell, Leics. Mrs J.S. Clarke, Clayton, Newcastle-U-Lyme.

Martin Feekings, Bourne, Lincs. Simon Bostock, Ilkeston, Derbyshire. Stephen Smith, Brian Hill Estate, Northants.

Thomas Gibson, Seaton, Aberdeen; Reg Weels, Wormley, Herts. Alan Miller, Llanishen, Cardiff, Andraw Wattins, Kenilworth, Warks. Derek Hane, Bow, London E3, Paul Alexander, Shepperton, Middx. Paul Rayner, Bromley, Kent. Miss Amnada Jones, Allestree, Derby, E, Maddock, Twickenham, Middx. M. Barfield, Upper Stoke, Kent. Duncan Fergredo, Aylestone, Leics. Maxwell Mudie, Pierside, Lymington.

lan Andrew, Slacksteads, Lancs. Christopher Jenkins, Copthorne, Shrewsbury. Ronan Flood, University of Essex.

M.T. Hatcher, Finchley, London.





The most wasted actress in America, Carrie Snodgress, continues more or less where she left off in Brian De Palma's The Fury, in her new American release — The Attlc. That is to say dead!

She was killed, as you may recall, in De Palma's overblown effort, and she doesn't look that much alive in George Edwards' movie.

Then again, who would when playing a small town librarian... living with a cruel tyrant of a father stuck in a wheelchair (from an accident she caused, and he never lets her forget (i)... and mooning all the while about her long lost beau, who disappeared on their very wedding day... and unsuccessfully attempting suicide while watching home movies of her handsome blond fellow and herself when young, vibrant – and alive.

Carrie's Louise Elmore is Miss Haversham, 1980 style. She doesn't exactly keep the wedding reception table still set for her guests, but the jilting by blondie is -rarely off her mind, what mind she has left.

She has planty of other things to occupy the attic of her mind. Mainly, how to rid herself of her father. She fantasies innumerable ways of how he might die. And he deserves them all. He's a thoroughly bad-tempered old rascal—and played, but of course, by Ray Milland. (He's never been likable since he took his touppe off for Low Story).

He's a liar and a cheat, too, as Carrie finds when pushing him in his chair for an Top: The ad art for the film. Centre: The gristly remains of Louise Elmore's (Carrie Snodgress) bridgroom-to-be. Left: A portrait of Louise

afternoon outing. His wheelchair runs into a stone, tips him out . . . and without thinking, he stands up. And walks. He's not paralysed at all. Well, that's the last straw and with all the fury of her years imprisoned by the old duffer, she's pushes him off the cliff.

He's not finished with her yet though.
She rushes to the real attic of their old lonely old house, to find his money.
Instead she finds . . . ah, but you've

guessed it, of course.

Yup, there he is, the old bridegroom, still dressed up in his Sunday best wedding suit. It's fraying at the edges. So is he. A skeleton now, with bones sticking through the clothes.

There, too, is Carrie's pet monkey, which Milland likewise knocked off and left hanging up there, decaying on a nail. And once the wind slams the door fast, there, too, is Carrie trapped for evermore. Screaming and screaming for release . . . . never to be heard.

While all this is okay as it goes, one has to feel more sympathy for Carrie Snodgress than the Tony Crechales and George Edwards script expects of us. Nearly ten years ago she made a movie called The Diary of a Mad Housewife. It wasn't a hit, but she was. Indeed, Carrie was hailed back then in much the same way as Meryl Streep has been cannonised in recent months. She is still every bit as fine an acting talent as Meryl—deserving, therefore, something rather better than The Attic.

"If you've got a talent, you don't lose it," she says. "It's just a matter of time for people to see that I was sincere in my reasons for dropping out of movies for seven years — It was personal, and not because I was incapable of handling success."

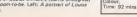
Here's hoping she finds it again. And sure, in our kind of films, why not? She's prowed her capabilities in The Fury, and she's rather better (naturally) than really called for in The Artic. She makes it a tense psychiatric study (well photographed by Orson Welles' pupil Gary Graver), but in the end it's really beneath her considerable talents.

#### Preview by Tony Crawley

#### The Attic (1980)

Carrie Snodgres (et Louise Elmore), Ray Milland (Wendell Elmore), Directed by George Etiwards, Screenpley by Tony Creshels and George Edwards, Protography by Garry Grever, Edited by Darek Parsons, Music by Hod Davis Schuldon, Produced by Raymond M. Dryden and Phillip Tandalli.

A Forum Production In association with Raymond M. Dryden and The Attic Associates for (USA) releases by Manson International. Colour.



# "DANGER:

sydney falco looks back at the 1968 dir







ome 12 years ago, when Mr Dino De Laurentiis want's emassing dollars through his lavish remakes (King Kong, Flash Gordon, etc) he produced as nappy, little comic strip caper called Danger: Diabolik. Based he Italian illustrated feature by Luciana and Angela Guissani, Diabolik arrives somewhere in the middle ground between Losey's Modestry Blaise and Vadim's Barbarella, Unlike Blaise and Barbarella, however, Diabolik is a Spider-Man like character from the wrong side of the tracks. The screenplay credits run like a roll-

call for the Italian Writers Guild — Dino Maiuri, Brian Degas, Tudor Gates, Mario Bava, from a story by Angela and Luciano Giussani, Dino Maiuri, and Adriano Baracco. Diabolik (played with the stealth of a weasel by John Phillip Law) is an international master thief who has hit the heights after a series of

robberies by hijacking a 10 million dollar gold shipment. Police Inspector Ginco (an over-dobbed Michel Piccoll) a tetemps to set a trap for him baising a million-dollar necklace as the bait. Diabolik, nevertheless, gets clean away with the loot. This comes over as one of the most enjoyable sequences in the movie, with Bava's excellent use of distortion lens producing some remarkably dizzying effects.

Diabolik's human-fly hiest:—scaling the

# DIABOLIK"

o de laurentiis comic strip adaptation.









sheer wall of a villa - results as a superb piece of high-tension film-making.

Inspector Ginco, following the failed trap, collaborates with underword chief-tain Rajph Valmont (a very over-dubbed Adolfo Celi) to catch the master criminal. Valmont decides to kidnap Diabolik's girl-friend Eva Kant (the delightfully delicious Marias Mell) but the elusive thief manages not only to rescue her and escape Ginco's trap but also blows up the

nation's tax records, to the delight of the public.

Finally, in a desperate, all-out effort to capture Diabolik, all the remaining gold reserve is melted down to produce one gigantic ingot, which is then encased in steel. However, when Diabolik successfully steals the ingot he is unaware that it has been made radioactive. Wearing a protective suit, he starts melting it down in his underground hideout. With the

police hot on Diabolit's radioactive trail the ingot suddenly explodes and covers him with molten gold, turning Diabolik into a statue. The glidded figure is put on display and Eav sits it is before she is arrested as an accomplice. What seems to have turned into an anti-climax still manages to surface on a high-note when Eva sees the statue smartly wink at her, proving that Diabolik has ultimately outwitted his adversaries.









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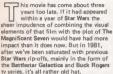
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## BATTILE BEYOND THE STARS

Review by John Brosnan



SNII, as rip-offs go, it's moderately good fun and, unusually for a Roger Corman production, it looks pretty good in terms of sets and special effects. Corman has received good value for the three million, or whatever, dollars her is supposed to have spint on it. The spaceships in particular are not only well animated but display a certain creativity in their design. The villanious Sador's ship, for instance, resembles a ciant





hammerhead shark while the hero's has a more organic, and female, look to it which is appropiate as it's controlled by a very maternal-sounding computer called Nell.

The problem of using the plot of The Magnificent Seven (or The Seven Samurai) is that it's all a bit predictable and the main source of interest comes from seeing how the western cliches are going to be translated into science fiction cliches. Sometimes it's done with a heartening touch of originality, at other times it's depressing in its banality. And with the character of Gelt, played by Robert Vaughn, there's no attempt at genre translation at all - he's lifted complete from The Magnificent Seven. costume and all, even down to the price for his services: "A meal and a place to sleep." Vaughn even gives the same world-weary performance though it's hard to tell whether he's acting or is genuinely bored with the proceedings.





threatened by bandits we've got a small arboral planet inhabited by a peace-loving people (who all seem to live in the one location) who are threatened by a space pirate called Sador (John Saxon) who wants to conquer their planet (I'm not sure why). He gives them a convenient breathing spell to consider his uttimatum which provides our hero, Shad, time to go off and round up some hired guns. Shad is played by Richard Thomas, and a curiously bland performance it is too. Perhaps all those years in The Waltons has burnt out his acting circuits . . . .

His first port of call is the space station of Dr Haphaestus, played by old Sam Jaffe with his head sticking out of a large bucket (the rest of him has worn out, you see). The only complete human on the station is his daughter Nanelia (Darlanne Fluegel, which sounds like a







Aboys: Coyshoy (George Peppard) at the control of his space ship. Above right: Gelf (Robert Vaginh) as differed in set from Vaginh's actific lift. The Megaliticant Seven. Below: Manella Charlane Fluegell repair one of the androids of the Hephestus space station. Far right: St Exmin (Sybil) Danning) in another of her turning occurrent from the lift. Right top: One of the many space thise that appear in the film. Right top: One of the span of the space of the space of the span of the



Danish pastry), all the other inhabitants are androids. Personally I found the scenes with the androids the most refreshingly original thing about the movie and I was sorry that at least one of the androids didn't accompany Shad and Nanelia on their subsequent adventures.

Shad's next recruit is the somewhat embarrassing character of Cowboy (played somewhat embarrassingly by George Peppard, another face from the past), a space adventurer who, like his name suggests, dresses up like cowboy and affects an Old West style of speech. Probably a cute idea on paper but a bit of a bore on the screen.

The most amusing among the motley bunch of humans and alleins that Shad takes back to his home planet is St Exmin, an Amazonian warrior known as Valkyrie (played by the voluptrous Sybil Danning who makes Lynda Carter look undermourished). Her main ambition is to die a glorious death in battle. "You've never seen anything until you've seen a Valkyrie go down," she tells Shad proudly.

The movie maintains its interest while Shad is gathering his recruits but once the fight begins in earnest against Sador and his forces it all degenerates into a long series of space battles that, though spectacular, quickly becomes both repetitive and tedious.

Probably the most discouraging thing about Battle Beyond the Stars is that the makers have felt obliged to go back to a western as their source material instead of mining the literature to science fiction itself for their ideas. By doing this they displayed the same lack of imagination in approaching the sf genre as the makers of Hawk the Slayer did in trying to put sword and sorcery on the screen. Lacking the confidence of attempting something new the makers of the latter film also exploited the plot of The Magnificent Seven, harnessing it to the visual style of an Italian western complete with a pseudo Ennio Morricone soundtrack.

Literary science fiction contains a whole treasure trove of ideas and settings waiting to be plundered by film makers with enough courage to try more than just copy what has gone before in the cinema, though they'll need to be a little careful about how they do it (Twentieth Century-Fox has just paid a hefty out-of-court settlement to author A.E. Van Yogt as acknowledgement that Allien owes a lot to his novel Voyage of the Space Beagle).

In the meantime you could do worse than pay Battle Beyond the Stars a visit. If you go not expecting too much you'll find it a moderately entertaining experience. It's certainly more fun than some space movies I could mention (but no, wild horses couldn't drag the words Flash Gordon yet again from my lips . .),







In the first half of a two part interview John Fleming talks to Douglas Adams, author of Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy and Restaurant at the End of the Universe, about his career and the various versions of Hitch Hikers Guide.

ouglas Adams has made it big. He's 6'5' tall. He was born in Cambridge in 1952. When he was born his father, a postgraduate theology student, was training for Holy Orders but friends persuaded him this was a bad idea and he gave it up. He wanted to do it again recently but was again disuaded.

This philosophical bent seems to have been passed on to young Douglab because, at school, he says, "They could never work out whether I was terribly clever or terribly stupid. I always had to understand everything full before I was prepared to say I knew anything." It was while still at school that he decided to become a comedy writer-performer after seeing John Cleese on BBC TV's The Frost Report. "I can do that!" he suddenly thought. "I'm as tall as he is!"

He appeared regularly in school plays and sometimes was asked to write. "I felt l ought to," he says. "I used to sit and worry and tear up pieces of paper and never actually write anything. It was awful. I've always found writing very

The original idea for Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy had come to Adams before he went to university, when he was drunk at a camp site near Innsbruck.

difficult: I don't know why I've wanted to do it. Sheer pervensity. I really wanted to be a performer and I'd still like to perform. I was a slightly strange actor. There tended to be things I could do well and other things I couldn't do dwarfs; I had a lot of trouble with dwarf parts".

He went to Cambridge University.

largely so be could join The Footlights, the student group which had pawered many of the people he most admired the writer performers of Beyond the Frings. That Was The Week That Was, I'm Sorry I'll Reed That Again, Monty Python's Flying Circus etc. During university vacations, he built barns and cleaned chicken sheets to make money and, for the first time, started to write seriously (if that's the word). He was involved in the creation of two Cambridge revues — Several Poor Players Strutting and Fretting and The Patter of Timy Minds.

The original idea for The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy had come to him





before he went to university, when he was drunk at a camp-site near Innsbruck, while travelling round with The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to Europe in his rucksack. But it was years before the idea came to fruition

After you left Cambridge, one of the things you did was collaborate with Graham Chapman of Monty Python's Flying Circus.

That's right. I wrote with him for about eighteen months on a lot of projects that mostly didn't see the light of day. And those which did actually didn't work

awfully well. Which ones did see the light of day? Well we wrote and made the pilot for a television comedy series. The series itself never got made because Graham got more involved back in Monty Python again. This was really during the Python Iull and nobody was quite sure what the future of Python was going to be. So we wrote this sketch show called Out of the Trees which actually had some very good material in it, but just didn't hang together properly. Graham was the sort of lead and there was also Simon Jones (who plays Arthur Dent in Hitch-Hiker) and Mark Wing-Davey (who plays Zaphod Beeblebrox). It was shown once on BBC2, late on Saturday night, against Match of the Day. I don't think it even got reviewed, it was that insignificant. There were some very nice things in it; it just didn't stand up. The structure for it hadn't really been found.

What else did you do with Graham Chanman?

Curiously enough, the thing we virtually came to blows about was his autobiography. He wanted to co-write it. He actually went through about five coauthors, of which I was the first, and really I didn't think it was getting anywhere because I didn't think it was the sort of thing you could do as a pair. It came out recently (A Liar's Autobiography, pub. Eyre Methuen) and it's good. I think there's one very bad section which was the bit he and I co-wrote. It must have seemed a great opportunity. Writing with one of the Monty Python stars.

Yes, the promise of that period, I thought This is terrific! This is my great break! And, at the end, there was nothing to show for it except a large overdraft and not much achieved. And I suddenly went through a total crisis of confidence and couldn't write because I was so panicked and didn't have any money and had a huge overdraft paying the £17-a-week rent. So I answered an advertisement in the Evening Standard and got a job as a bodyguard to an Arab oil family. But you were still sending off ideas to The Burkiss Way on Radio 4. Yes Simon Brett, the producer of The

Burkiss Way, asked me if I'd like to write some bits for it and, at that stage, I just felt I'm washed up. I can't write. I may as well accept this fact now. But he insisted, so I sat down and wrote a sketch which.

thought, would prove to everybody onceand-for-all that I could no longer write sketches. And everybody seemed to like it rather a lot. (Laughs) The one thing I'd spent all the summers since Cambridge trying to interest people in was the idea of doing science-fiction comedy; I couldn't get anybody interested at all. Simon was the only person I hadn't gone to with the idea. And, after I'd done these bits for Burkiss, he said to me, quite out-of-the-blue, I think it would be nice to do a science fiction comedy series. It was extraordinary. And so it carried on from there. It was around this same time you got

involved with Dr Who. Well, after we'd done the pilot of Hitch-Hiker it took a long, long time before BBC Radio decided to go ahead and I was desperate for money. So I sent the first copy of that Hitch-Hiker script to Bob Holmes, who was then script editor of Dr Who and he said Oh ves, we like this.

Come in and see us. So I talked to them



for e long time.

You sent it in as a Dr Who idea, or . . No, just to sort of sev Here I am - This is what I do. And I ended up getting e commission to write four episodes of Dr. Who (The Pirate Planet) but it didn't really work out as something which was going to fill in thet gap, beceuse that took a long time to come through too. I eventuelly ended up getting the commission to write the rest of Hitch-Hiker and the Dr Who episodes simultaneously in the same week. So that became a serious problem. (Laughs) And I got through the first four episodes of Hitch-Hiker and then I had to breek off to get the Dr Who episodes done - so I did those et e real gallop. And, at the end of thet, I was totally zonked. I knew a lot of whet was going to happen in the last two episodes of Hitch-Hiker but I just couldn't sort of get myself to a typewriter and just needed help end a sounding-board just to

get it done So John Lloyd (now producer of Not The Nine O'Clock News) helped you write parts of episodes 5 and 6

John Lloyd end I had known each other for years and, et one stege, actually shered e flet together and kept on halfproducing ideas which never really came to fruition . . . Actuelly, there was one thingl About two or three yeers ego, he and I wrote e couple of cartoons for e

Dutch television compeny. They were meking a series called Doctor Spungles (Leughs) It was being made internationelly, so the scripts were being written by British writers and it was being performed in English with Peter Ustinov doing the voices. I gather one of the episodes we wrote ectuelly won an award last yeer. I think it is eventuelly coming to British television and it'll be rather curious to see it. What was it about?

Well, if you can imegine e cross between Professor Brenestawm end Dr Dolittle . . It was quite fun working on that actuelly. The writers' fees were rip-off time. But It was immense fun - there were ell sorts of things we could do in animation

It sounds a busy time. The way things went, yes. I was writing Hitch-Hiker (the first redio series) for e lot of 1977 end we were meking it et the end of 1977/beginning of 1978 and it went out starting in Merch 1978, During that time, I was living at home with my parents end the fee for writing the first redio series was miserable - something like £1000 for the six episodes - which is not e lot for something over six months' work. So I was thinking I'm such a slow writer end it looked as though Hitch-Hiker might do ok; but there was no precedent for a redio series meaning very

Above centre: Zaphod Beeblebrox as he appeared in the stage play of Hitch Hikers. Below: The howercraft for the stage play under construction. Opposite: Douglas Adams pictured during the production of the Hitch Hikers radio series. Opposite Inset: Tom Baker as Doctor Who,



much in the long run. So I was then offered e job as e BBC Radio producer end I thought I ought to do it for the money. During the six months, Hitch-Hiker began to be e success and I was producing Week Ending, which was quite fun. In fect, the first job I was given was compiling e programme ebout practical jokes. I had to go out end interview Max Bygraves end Des O'Connor, I thought What am I doing here? But I knew people hed put themselves out to help me get this job and it was a staff job, not e contract job, so to leeve efter six months would be ridiculous.

Then you were offered the job as script editor on Dr Who.

Yes, which caused en immense rumpus. And I did Dr Who for fifteen months and it was e terrible, terrible time. It was greet to begin with, while I felt I was actually maneging to juggle all the balls et the seme time. Because, et the end of 1978, I was writing the first Hitch-Hiker book. trying to get down to writing the second radio series which kept getting put off and put off and I was script editing Dr Who end having to produce lots end lots of storylines for writers. And I wes also doing one fairly major last job as e redio producer - a pantomime show for Christmas called Black Cinderella Two Goes East. Everyone involved in it - the writers end all the cast - were ex-Cambridge Footlights. So we had Rob Buckmen pleying Prince Charming and Peter Cook was his brother Prince



Disgusting and John Cleese played the fairy godperson. John Pardoe M.P. played the Fairytale Liberal Prime Minister - on the grounds that you only get Liberal Prime Ministers in fairy tales. The Goodies played the Ugly Sisters, Jo Kendall played the wicked stepmother and Richard Murdoch was in it too. It was terrific, but the BBC gave it no publicity whatsoever.

And after that you were able to devote more time to script editing. What exactly does a script editor on Dr Who do? Everything, Oh god! I was very naive when I wrote Pirate Planet because I'd always assumed that, basically, writing the script is the writer's job and coming up with all the ideas is the writer's job. So I worked very, very hard on The Pirate
Planet scripts. Then, when I came to be script editor. I discovered other writers assumed that getting the storyline together was the script editor's job. So. all that year, I was continually working out storylines with another writer, helping yet another writer with scripts. doing substantial re-writes on other scripts and putting yet other scripts into production - all simultaneously. When you're doing 26 half-hours in a year. that's a helluva lot. And, at the same time, writing the first Hitch-Hiker book. And also trying to do the second radio series. It was an absolute nightmare year. For four months when I was actually in control it was terrific - when you feel you're actually in control of all that and

actually getting it done. Having all these different storylines in your mind simultaneously. A writer suddenly phones you up at midnight and you've got to know exactly what he's talking about and exactly what his problems are and sort them all out. You actually get very high on that, as long as you cope. But, as soon as you stop actually coping [Laughs], it becomes a nightmare.

You finished working on Dr Who in January 1980 and by then Hitch-Hiker had really taken off and become a cult. It had even been on stage.

Well, it's been on stage three times and the one which got all the notice was the one that didn't work. Ken Campbell did two. His first one at the I.C.A. (Institute of Contemporary Arts, London) went very, very well. The audience was put on a hovercraft and the action all took place round the edge of the theatre. I didn't believe it till it actually happened. We were turning away 1500 people a night from that show, but only getting 80 people in, because that was all you could fit on the hovercraft. Then Theatre Clwyd did Hitch-Hiker with a touring company in Wales. They would sometimes do two episodes in an evening and, at other times, the whole lot which was a long evening. That went very well. I didn't know anything about Theatre Clwyd: I just thought it was

going to be a load of Welshmen going round saving Hello, bov-oh! But it wasn't at all; it was a very good production. So they were then offered The Old Vic but by then. I'd already offered the stage rights to Ken Campbell, who wanted to do another production. He decided to go for broke and put it on at The Rainbow (in Finsbury Park, London), I should have known better, but I had so many problems to contend with at that time I wasn't really thinking awfully clearly. The thing at The Rainbow was a fiasco.

Don't Paniel The second part of the Douglas Adams interview will appear in next month's Starburst, along with rare production designs for the tv version of Hitch Hikars Guide to the Galaxy.





he Wizard of Oz a stinkeroo? The much-lowed fantasy a soaking wet fruit cake? When The Wizard of Oz was first released it garnered more bad reviews than good. In fact, the film was pretty much a box officer disaster and took nearly twenty years to recoup its production cost of 2.777.000 dollars.

It was in 1956 that the CBS television network tried to buy the tv rights to Gone With the Wind from MGM for one mild odlars. The company refused and CBS put in a bid for The Wizard of Oz. For 225,000 dollars they obtained the option of showing the film annually and that's how the feature became a classic and perennial Christmas treat. Similar

deals with television stations and networks around the world followed and there are few countries in which The Wizard of Oz is not as traditional as turkey over the festive season.

The Wonderful Wizerd of Oz was published in 1900 and was among a series of books featuring the adventures of Dorothy of Kansas. The author, L. Frank Baum, was attempting to create a series of children's frantasies which were wholly American in concept and character, yet would be as successful as the European fairy tales of Hans Anderson and the brothers Grimm.

In 1903 a New York production of The Wizard was staged with great success,

running for 293 performances at the Majestic Theatre on Broadway. The show went on tour visiting nearly one thousand American cities and towns. A one reel film version was lensed in 1910 by the Selig Company but caused no impact.

The New York-born Baum moved to Hollywood in 1911, eight years before his death, and founded the Oz Film Company. It produced several features and shorts including a five reel movie, The Arctiwork Gill of Oz. Baum also mede two other five reelers but when the first proved a disester, distributors insisted that the second, The Magic Claek of Oz, be cut down to two reels and that the third be retitided from His Mejesty. The Scarecrow of Oz to the more commercial The New Wizard of Oz. The changes didn't help. All three films were box offices failures.

In 1925 Selig Oz Pictures produced a vestor of The Wizard of Oz starring Dorothy Dawn as Dorothy. The film was co-written by silent star comedian Larry Semon who played the Scarerow and also directed the film. Oliver Hardy, only a few years from his fateful tearing with Stan Laurel, played the Tin Woodsman. The film was a flop, probably due to Semon concentrating the script and the film on his own knock shout talents.

By 1937 the film rights to The Wizard of Oz were in the hands of Sam Goldwyn.

who had resisted attempts by Twentieth Century-Fox to obtain the property as a vehicle for Shirley Temple. Goldwyn sold the rights to Louis B. Mayer for 75,000 dollars and the project was turned over to producer Mervyn LeRoy.

Le Roy had been a successful director at Warrer Roy, responsible for such classics as Little Caeser, Five Star Final, I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang and Goldiggers of 1933. He was wooed over to MGM by the guerantee of an annual salary of 300,000 dollars. Le Roy was keen to produce The Wizard of Oz. Had the 37 year old producer Known the problems that lay ahead he might not have been so enthusiastic. By the time it.

was finished, the film had ten script writers and four directors, had overrun its budget by nearly one million dollars and was six months in the making.

Herman Mankiewicz was the first writer to attempt to transform Baum's classic to the screen. Mankiewicz had a stormy relationship with MGM. He had scripted the witty Dinner at Eight in 1934 and had been working on the Marx Bros' A Night At the Opera before being thrown off the lot by the mercurial head of production Irving Thalbero.

Mankiewicz was rehired by Mayer after Thalberg's death but fired him again in 1939 when the writer became involved in a high stakes poker game, Mankiewicz









Opposites: A publicity photo of the cast of The Wilsard of Oz (1939), depicting The Cowardly Lion (Bert Lahr) The Trin Men (Lack halay), Dorothy Lludy Gelefand), The Wilsard (Frank Mongan) and the Scancrow, (Ray Bolger, Top: Dorothy and the Scancrow for into their "We're Off to See the Wizerd" routine, Above: Though Judy Gerlend was finally cast as Dorothy, both Shirley Temple and Deanna Durbin were also contenders for the role.

eventually turned in an outline for The Wizard of 02, though it was incomplete, it would appear that little of his work remained in the film, though he did contribute one important element. That was the opening sequence set in Kansas should be shot in black and white and all the 02 scenes would be in Technicolor. After departing the 02 production Manklewicz went on to write Citizen Kane for Orson Welles and to win himself an Oscar for that film in 1941.

With the departure of Manklewicz, Ogden Nash was brought on to the film as was Noel Langley, a London-based playwright. The twenty-six year old Langley wrote Maytime for the dreaded duo of Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald and went on to work on Sweethearts for the wan warblers as well as contributing to Babes in Arms (Garland and Mickey Rooney) and King Vidor's Northwest Passage. Nash stuyed on the project for a few weeks though doesn't appear to have contributed anything to the script

Contributed anything to the script. Most of Langley's ideas remained in the movie and it is really his script which is the core of the feature. After Langley left The Wizard of Oz he was replaced in rapid succession by Herbert Fields, Florence Ryerson, Edgar Allan Woolf, Jack Mintz, Sid Silvers and John Lee Mahin. Some, like Fields, added nothing to the production, while others contributed ideas and outlines which added up to the finished screenplay. WGM, like all the major Hollywood studies of the thirties and forties, was a factory and The Wizard of Oz had been passed along the production line. The passed along the production line.

Wizard had been created by a committee. With what seemed like a workable script completed LeRoy began casting. After all these years of familiarity with Judy Garland in the role of Dorothy it seems difficult to believe that she was third choice for the role. But in 1937 Garland was a contract player for MGM. earning 250 dollars a week. Just as Fox had wanted The Wizard of Oz for their number one star Shirley, so MGM wanted Shirley for their production of Oz. A loan-out deal was struck between the two companies. Fox were to borrow Clark Gable and Jean Harlow for In Old Chicago and in return were to loan Temple for The Wizard of Oz. The sudden and tragic death of Harlow in mid-1937 brought an end to the deal. Teenage songbird Deanna Durbin was considered but her increasing bust size cancelled her out for the part. After all Dorothy, in the

Francis Gumm had been part of a singing trio since the age of two and by the time she was contracted to MGM as Judy Garland in 1935 was a seasoned showbiz trouper. The studio make-up department got to work on Judy. Her breasts were pulled in with a corset, her teeth were capped, her nose was

books of Oz, was a mere six years old.



Top: Donothy Lludy, Gartand) and the Scenecrow (Ray Bolger) set to work to fine the Tin Man (Jack Heley) From his rusty peralysis. Abover. The Coverdity Lion (Bert Lahn), Donothy (Lion (Bert Lahn), Donothy (Lion (Bert Lahn), Donothy (Lion (Bert Lahn), Donothy (Lion (Bert Lahn)), Do

broadened with putty and she was crowned with a blonde wig. As Garland described it in later years, "I looked like a male Mary Pickford." After two weeks of disasterous shooting all but the special corset were gone.

Other major parts were cast. Buddy Ebsen (best remembered for *The Beverley Hillbillies* to series of the Sixties and more recently the geriatric cop *Barnaby Jones*) was signed to play the Tin Man. After

those first two weeks the actor was taken ill with a chest complaint and admitted to hospital. On examination it was discovered that the make-up used to give the tin effect had made the actor ill. After an application of white grease-paint the actor was sprayed with aluminium dust. The dust had got into his lungs, and though Ebsen recovered, he was off the picture.

recording all his songs and shooting for

Ebsen was replaced by Jack Haley and the dangerous make-up was changed. Other key parts went to Bert Lahr as the Cowardly Lion and Ray Bolger as the Scarecrow. All three were vetran avuel-ville performers and brought much of their stage persone and art to the film. Margaret Hamilton, a character actress who specialised in spiritarish roles, was cast as the Wicked Wirth of the West. Shertock Holman Gale

Sondergaard was tested for the part but was considered to slinky and sexy to be an effective witch. Even dear old Edna May Oliver was considered before Margaret Hamilton was signed.

Margaret Hamilton was signed.
For the part of the Wizard Frank
Morgan was cast after MGM had tried to
tampt W.C. Fields with the offer of 500
dollars a day. Fields though, too busy
over at Universal writing his classic
starrer. You Can't Cheat an Honest Man.



for the Wizard as was Wallace Beery.

To play Glinda, the Good Witch, MGM
selected Billie Burke, a light comedienne
and widow of the late, great showman
Florence Zigfield. The greatest casting
problem was presented by Dorothy's dog
Toto. After much searching a female
Caim terrier anmed Terry was worked
so hard that she came close to a nervous
breakdown, Spitz received 125 dollars for
his and Terry's services.

his and Terry's services. An MGM contract director, Richard Thorpe was chosen for the film. He lasted two weeks. Thorpe was a journeyman director and is best remembered today for his film version of Emlyn Williams' Night Must Fall in 1938, Following Thorpe's departure MGM's ace "woman's director" George Cukor was brought onto the film. He looked at the footage shot by Thorpe and like everybody else was appalled. It was Cukor who decided that Garland's blonde wig and false teeth should go and during the brief hiatus between directors Margaret Hamilton's make-up was also modified. Cukor would seem to have been brought in as an advisor only, giving the studio breathing space to find a new director for the seemingly ill-fated production.

seemingly III-rated production.
Victor Fleming was next ushered into the director, Feming was next ushered for the director, Feming had been responsible for such MGM hits at Treasure Island for such MGM hits at Treasure Island to such HGM hits at Victoria Courageous (1937) and the strength of the AC Courage of the AC

Replacing Fleming was another MGM contract director, King Vidor, Vidor, a respected director since the silent days of respected director since the silent days of respected director since the silent days of feature. Despite up to one ends of the feature. Despite up to one ends of the responsible for writing and directing The Wizard of Oz, the only names to appear on the credits were those of Fleming as director and Langley, Ryerson and Woolf as screenwirters.

as screenwhars.
Despite the light, fairy-tale touch of The Wizard of Oz the film was tought owns on. The amount of light required to shoot the three-strip Technicolor ensured on-set temperatures of up to one hundred degrees F. It proved particularly uncomfortable for Lahr, Halley and Bolger as well as the two hundred midgets hired to play The Munchkins. They were all buried under pounds of make-up and completely shot on the MGM is own stages there was no respite from the blighting with the billinghold in the MGM is one stages there was no respite from the blightinghold in Links.

Special effects played a great part in The Wizard of Oz and they came under the control of A. Arnold "Buddy"



Gillespie, Gillespia had been at MGM from its aarliest days and stayed with tha studio until he retired. He worked on virtually avery major MGM film during his years with the studio and headed a special affects department second to nona

in Hollywood.

Many effects were required for The Wizard, ranging from miniatures and mattes right through to full scala mechanical affects and optical work. Ona of the great effects sat-pieces in the film is tha tomado seguance which occurs in tha opening black and white Kansas scenes. As with any MGM "A" feature of the period no expense was spared. Gillaspia's first attempt at a tomado. using a thirty-five foot rubber cona was unsuccessful on film and was scrapped. despite having cost 8000 dollars to create. Gillespie realisad the principal was right, based on a navigational wind sock, but tha material was wrong. The affacts department built it again, only this time from muslin. The thirty-five foot long muslin tube was suspended from a specially built gantry above the stage and ran down to a slot in the stage floor.

The top of the sock was run around the gantry by a small car and the bottom was hald down by a stage hand. Fullers earth was sprayed into the bottom of the muslin to give the illusion of the dust raised by the tornado. The complated footage was then used on a back projection screen while Judy Garland ran on treadmill in front to give the finished affect of Dorothy running away from tha tornado. This particular sequence was tharefore the single most costly affact in tha film.

To catalogue all the affects in The Wizard of Oz would take up an antire issue (and than some) of Starburst, It is to Gillespie's credit that the effects in tha film stand up to repeated viawings. Tha Hawkmen of the recent Flash Gordon owe much to Gillespia's flying monkey creatures of The Wizard of Oz. though the affect in The Wizard is far superior. The artificial confection of Munchkinland is enhanced by some superb matte paintings, actually axacutad in pastels, which further add to the fairtytale quality of the film and give it an extraordinary depth of field. If you sea a good

print of The Wizard of Oz you would almost swear it was in 3D.

The Wizard of Oz is also a musical and many of the songs have gone on to become standards. In particular Over the Rainhow became a highlight of Judy Garland's stage performances. In later years though, the song became a tortured ballad raflecting her own personal pain. The songs for The Wizard were penned by E.Y. "Yip" Harburg and Harold Arlan and were all written in a way that would advance the story. Most of the music in tha film is joyous, particularly We're Off To See The Wizard and Ding Dong the Witch is Dead. The musical director for the film was Harbert Stothart who composed a linking score

The filming was complated on March 16, 1939 and The Wizard of Oz was previewed. It was thought that Over The Rainbow slowed down the pace of the film and added nothing to the story. MGM decided to cut the song but the decision was raversed when it was discovered that Over The Rainbow was selling well as shaet music, the equivalent of today's top ten record charts. Ironically, Over The Rainbow picked up the Oscar for Best Song in that years' Academy Awards.

The Wizard of Oz was also nominated as Best Picture but lost out to Gone With the Wind. Judy Garland received a Special Award from the Academy for har performance and Harbert Stothart received tha Best Original Score award.

If it hadn't bean for the sale of The Wizard of Oz to CBS Talevision it is likely that the film would not be particularly remembered today. Rathar, it would be regarded as just another early Judy Garland musical from the Thirties, Its annual screanings on television around tha world have elevated the film to classic stature, and rightly so. Despite the film's critical panning and lack of success at the box office on its releasa. The Wizard of Oz is far from "a stinkaroo", as Russal Maloney described it all thosa years ago.

Whare the film seemed to fail for critics and public alike in 1939 was in the vaudevillian clowning of the principals. particularly Lahr, Haley and Bolger, But the generations that have grown up with The Wizard since its tv airings in 1956 naver knaw vaudavilla and the manic gambolings of Dorothy, tha Cowardly Lion, the Tin Man and the Scarecrow retain a freshness for each new audience that discovers the wonderful Wizard of Oz.



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# STARBURST INTERVIEW WITH SYRII DANAING



ardly has Battle Beyond the Stars got off the ground than I learn that there's to be a sequel. And the lady who has revealed this information to me is Sybil Danning, who plays a Valkirian warrior, St Exmin, in the film. "And we'll be doing the second part

BY MIKE MUNN

this year," she said.

"We? You mean you" be in it?" I asked somewhat unbelievingly.

Now, for those of you who haven't yet seen the movie and who may be thinking how ungracious I am to feel that the

lovely Sybil should be excluded from Part

Two, I think, at this stage, it won't hurt any to reveal that St Exmin gets blown to smithereens.

"You did get killed, didn't you?" I asked her, just in case I'd blinked at that moment and missed something.

"That's a good question," she replied.
Well, I thought it was. She continued:
"When we were filming I asked our
director, Jimmy Murakami, "Supposing
we do so well that we make a second
one? What am I aging to do?"

"Well, the answer is, you only presume she dies. But in the movies, anything goes ... especially in outer-space. She could have dissolved. So maybe in the next one she'll come back the way she left."

Of course, as in all reputable goodiesversus-the-baddies-tales, the villain, Sador, doesn't come off too well either, so how's he going to beat Darth Vader at his own game by managing to avoid destruction?

"Don't forget, Sador has visited all those planets taking parts of different parts of the human body for himself, so maybe he had a little fun doing it," said Sybli. "He may have some children around."

That's probably why she eagerly accepted the role of St Exmin while no

"I think if special effects are welldone, then it's a necessary part of the film. And if you're good enough, there can be nothing around you to disturb your performance."

doubt many a more famous actress would have declined it. Like the better known members of the cast – Richard Thomas, George Peppard and Robert Vaughn – Sybil saw a golden opportunity to get to a young audience, the people who go most often to the movies.

It's part of her calculated offensive on Hollywood where she has lived for the past three years after living for most of her life in her mother land, Germany, She admits that her first two years in America were heart breaking. But in that last year she has landed leading roles in The Salamander opposite Anthony Quinn and Sam Marlow, Private Eye. Previously she had only played in small parts . . . if she was lucky. Parts in films like Meteor, in which she played the almost forgettable role of a girl on a skiing holiday in St. Moritz who gets bulldozed by an avalanche caused by a splinter from the offending meteor.

Personally, I liked that film, but it didn't impress many others.

"It came out too late," concedes Sybil. "And they couldn't get the meteor right. I said to them that perhaps they should get a piece of coal. Sometimes the



It was her first co-starring role with a special effect, and I can promise that in Battle Beyond the Stars the effects are certainly more extensive and a lot better. I asked Sybil if she was concerned that her performance could have become dwarfed by the magical spectacle.

"No, it's part of technology, it's today, it's today, it's the future, it's timing. I think if special effects are done well, then it's a necessary part of the film. And if you carry off your part well, then you don't have to worry. If you're good enough

there can be nothing around you to disturb your performance. So whether it's a meteor or Anthony Quinn next to me – and they're both much the same thing – it doesn't hurt you."

With so much of the action in Battle being performed by miniature spacecraft while she sat couped up in the interior set of her ship, did she know exactly what was going on supposedly outside?

"I must say that the script was excellent in that it explained exactly what was going on. When I read it I thought that if they could put just half of



that on the screen it would look fantastic. and they managed to get it on the screen exactly like it was in the screenplay. So when I'm sitting in the spaceship acting like I was shooting at Sador, I knew exactly what point came when.

"I also knew the kind of effects they were trying to achieve because from the moment I was on the film I was shown the models which were very interesting. very pretty. I didn't see my own spaceship, though, because it was still being worked on."

St Exmin is not your actual Princess

Leia stereotype. She's a mischievous sex kitten who purrs the loudest when in

"That's what I liked about the character," said Sybil, "She had the best of both worlds; she was allowed to be sexy and she was also violent. Being a warrior who's sexy appealed, I think, to men and women

'She's a sort of mixture between Tinkerbell and Barbarella.

"I liked playing her because I was a tomboy as a child and it's like my childhood came back, and being in those

costumes it was like Halloween lasting six weeks "

Yes, about those costumes. Besides being very revealing, they also looked extremely uncomfortable. There was the battle dress which looked like it was so tight it had split in a hundred delicate places and was being held together with chains, while the other had a bra that was more like gnarled old hands.

"That battle dress was such a hassle to get out of that when I put it on in the morning I refrained from using the ladies room all day," she said.

"All the little chains were hung on after I was in the costume because there were parts of me (she didn't say which parts) which stretched the holes and they would have ripped if the chains were too tight. Once it was on it was not too comfortable.

"The other one, the real Valkirian looking outfit with the big head gear. wasn't quite so had. But I couldn't sit down in the belt I had on because it could easily break."

As has been said, St Exmin does go in a blaze of glory, though where to it's not known just yet, but she does see her departure as being symbolic of The Seven

"The heroine sees three fighters coming at her and she knows there's no way out and before being destroyed she decides what her fate will be at that moment instead of letting it happen."

Samurai which inspired John Sturges to make The Magnificent Seven which in turn inspired Roger Corman to make Battle Beyond the Stars.

"It could be seen a little as a symbolic hari-kiri, you know? I mean, the heroine. sees three fighters coming at her and she knows there's no way out and before being destroyed she decides what her fate will be at that moment instead of letting it happen.

"And then there are many comparisons with The Magnificent Seven, There was a character in that film - I forget which one - who said, 'I'll come along for a place to lay my head, and for something to eat. In this film Robert Vaughn, who was in Magnificent Seven, says he'll take the job 'for a place to sleep and a meal."

I saw Sybil's character as being reminiscent of the one Horst Buchholtz played in the western classic because, like his character, Chico, St Exmin is the one they don't want along at first. But then St Exmin is exactly what The

Magnificent Seven definitely didn't have. "And I think it was time they did,"

put in Sybil, lighting a torch for women's lib in outer-space.

### 'IT'S ONLY A MOVIE!

A regular column by author and Starburst film critic John Brosnan.

III hile awaiting the expected feminist backlash from last issue's column I just want to say a few more words on the subject of movie violence against women before changing my name and emigrating to South America. In the month since I wrote that piece the campaign gathered pace, culminating with a series of demonstrations in various London cinemas. One victim of such action was the London Pavilion which was showing a double bill of When a Stranger Calls and Monster red paint was thrown at the screen, with the result that it had to be replaced at a cost of £5,000.

Well, I don't know about you but I find that sort of thing offensive. It's nothing more than mob censorship. Of course, I would have been even more offended if I'd happened to be in the cinema at the time. Watching a movie in any West End cinema is difficult enough, what with people continually talking in loud voices and crumpling packets of crisps, without having horders of screaming feminists leaping up and throwing paint at the screen (though I have been in cinemas where no one would notice if such a thing did happen).

The campaign continued in the press as well. My award for Silliest Article on the Subject goes to Sally Vincent for her piece in the New Statesman, After taking a quick crash-course in horror films she then proceeded to interpret their hidden intentions in a way that frankly amazed me. For example: "The audience of a film like He Knows You're Alone is invited to identify and empathise with the killer; to try, in fact, to be him . . . The audience is both voveur and aggressor. At one point we actually follow a girl while she jogs through a wood. We see her vulnerable back, pick up her nervous tension. We keep pace, then move nearer and nearer. We approach precisely to the point of murder. The knife is right there in the audience's hand, the sense of vengeance up behind its eyeballs."

Speak for yourself, Ms Vincent — there was no sense of vengeance behind my eyeballs. There may have been a vague sense of tension mixed with boredom at seeing such an old fashioned cinematic ploy being used yet again. It is, of course, a device that has been used in suspense movies since the year dot and one can only presume Ms Vincent doesn't go to the cinema much. Its purpose is to create an atmosphere of unesse by using the camera as a subjective viewpoint.





Admittedly it serves to accentuate the vulnerability of whoever's in front of the camera but that's the whole point of such a sequence. To claim that such anxietyinducing techniques are also urging the audience to commit murder is, I think, somewhat ludicrous.

What is really irritating about her description of that sequence is that she gives the impression it ends with an actual murder when in reality it was just a false alarm (another old cinematic ploy). The

subjective viewpoint created by the pursuing camera turns out to belong to no one more sinister than a fellow jogger! It really wasn't very nice of Ms Vincent to mislead her readers in this way just because she wanted to add substance to her argument.

It all goes to show you can read anything you want into a movie but I think that the feminists are going a little too far when they claim that movies about murder are actually advocating it,





or at the very least condoning murder. Admittedly certain film makers, along with ty programme makers, writes of thrillers, detactive stories etc. sex pol turlers, detactive stories etc. which degrees of good tates, but that is a different thing altogether (otherwise Agatha Christie, among others, has a lot to answer for). Whether or not violence in the media does have harmful effects is yet to be proved but to say that film makers like Brian De Palma are setting out deliberately to encourage attacks on women is, in my opinion, hogwash.

No one can deny, least of all me, that women are particularly utinerable to random violence (not that this is danger unique to women are still vividence (not that this is danger unique to women at still vividence passing again of youthe deed of the use me as a human football in a Sydney street) but by reading into horror movies all kinds of evidence pointing to a friendish male plot the feminists are just indulging in a piece of intellectual dishonesty that is both self-desivition and sills both self-desivition and sills both self-desivition and sills so this self-desivition and sills so the self-desivition and sills self-desived and sills self-desived and sills self-desived and sel

As another example of how different people can interpret the same movie in different ways I offer this quote from Philip French, the film critic for The Observer. Writing about the movies of 1980 he says: "The two best horror movies — the playful Time After Time ... and Brian De Palma's stunningly accomplished Dressed to Kill — showed a tender regard for the vulnerability of women."

For that Mr French receives my Brawest Film Critic of the Year Award and an invistation to join me in South America. (My Craven Critic of the Year Award goes to Barry Norman who recanted his previous high opinion of Dressed to Kill and joined the feminist band wagon.)

On the subject of awards here are mine for the best genre movies of 1980, if anyone's interested. You are? Good, then I shall continue. The Brosnan Award for Best Fantasy goes to The Empire Strikes

Clockwise from top left. Jack Nicholson goes over the top in The Shining, Malcolm McDowall. as It. G. Wells in the nest Time After Time. If mostly Dalton and Sam Jones bettle is out, both with each other and with the acript, in Flash Gordon. Allen wan't in the running but we like this joiture, And the case of Irwin Allen's When Time Ran Out are pictured here in state of those after receiving their cheques.

Back which for all its faults (see issue 23 for a description of said faults) stands head and shoulders above all the other contenders. The Empire Strikes Back is also the runner-up for my Most Pisappointing Genre Movie of the Year Award, being beaten by The Shining, I had incredibly high hopes for both of these films and though both are superior examples of movie-making they fell short of my expectations. However The Shining fell much further short than did The Empire Strikes Back

Taking a deep breath while booking my passage for South America I give the Best Horror Movie Award to Dressed to Kill. Runners up are The Long Weekend and The Shining (with reservations).

There were several contenders for the Irwin Allen Silliest Movie of the Year Award, including Raise the Titanic and The Final Countdown but the winner has to be Irwin Allen's wery own When Time Ran Out . . . I still start giggling whenever I think about it.

The Award for Best Science Fiction
Movie goes to Saturn 3, mainly because
there wasn't many reals if movies around
in 1980. My Award for Most Underrated
Genre Movie has to go to The Island
which was much better than the critics
said, while the Most Embarrassing Movie
Award goes to Somewhere in Time (I
guess I'm just not a romantic at heart).

And finally the Stinker of the Year Award will be dropped on Flash Gordon from a great height. This movie also grabs the Worst Actor Award for Sam Jones and whoever it was who dubbed his voice. Jones narrowly beat John Terry, the star of Hawk the Slayer who is so expressionless I suspect he may be a robot (he certainly speaks like one).

Seasking of Flash Gordon my prediction in sissue 28 that it would be a box office flop seems, at the time of writing, to be proving a correct one. According to Variety it's doing so badly at the box office in only the third week of its release in America it's being pulled out of many major criemes and replaced with another film. I won't say I told you so, Dino!

Still on the subject of Flash I heard an amusing story at last year's Novacon science fiction convention in Birmingham. The organisers had arranged a screening of Flesh Gordon at another venue outside the convention hotel but I was surprised to hear the hotel receptionist announce, over the P.A. system, that the film due to be screened was Flash Gordon. Later I asked one of the organisers if he'd somehow managed to have a sneak preview of Flash Gordon instead of Flesh Gordon, "No," he sighed, "It was Flesh Gordon alright but when I went back to the receptionist and told her it wasn't Flash Gordon, it should be Flesh Gordon she said, 'I'm not saying that over the air."



## TVZONE

ince the medium of television is slowly but surely starting to receive the serious consideration and appreciation that it has sorely lacked during its thirty-year history as a popular industry. I think it now appropriate to raise 10 questions about ty's present state within the genre, and where it's going. 1. Why doesn't some energetic British tv buff/student/fan/historian produce a complete history of British small-screen science-fantasy? Gary Gerani's wonderful Fantastic Television was not only a milestone in recording the detailed history of fantasy ty but also served as page one of a map of the medium as a whole. Where is the British Fantastic Television, reaching back to when BBC-tv produced The Time

Machine in 1949? 2. Almost anyone these days can lay their hands on highly-detailed information concerning the shows Star Trek, Doctor Who. The Prisoner. The Avenuers Thunderbirds, etc, simply because they have become the perpetually-praised cult shows of tv. But what about all the other equally important shows within the genre? Certainly some detailed research/ analysis should be undertaken on such items as Tales of Mystery, Haunted, Out of This World, Mystery and Imagination, It's Dark Outside, The Voodoo Factor, etc. etc? Or are they all going to be allowed to vanish into that limboland of "lost" television?

3. So far only the BBC have made any attempt, however faint, to present a form of retrospective television (with The Outer Limits). With the prospect of the fourth channel busily looming on the horizon, ty buffs like myself hope that the respective programme planners maintain some sense of ty history and allocate a slot to cater for "old" television. Is it really too much to ask that the medium should show a respect for its own history? With a lot of this stuff still available, let's see a slot for re-viewing The Twilight Zone or Kolchak: The Night Stalker or One Step Beyond or Alfred Hitchcock Presents, anything and everything that reaches from the inner mind to . . .

4. It appears that when daily newspaper to critics are lost for something to bitch about, their minds ticking over in neutral, they always return to that good old target of put-down — the American import to movie or series. When are these people going to realise that the eternal cliche of "British to is the best in the world and everything less is rubbish" is beginning to.



annoy? Its most recent great revival came shortly after the spell of Christmas movies on tv. Personally, the only stuff that I could stomach during the holiday period on tv were the movies: I mean who could give up something like 20 000 Leagues Under the Sea in order to watch Barbara Woodhouse's Christmas Party at the Dogpound, or some such nonsense? In short, when are critics going to stop bitching and biting about US tv imports and take a real good, hard look at some of our own home-grown junk on tv? 5. For the most part, the only serious criticism that tv gets via regular film (as opposed to strictly Cinema) periodicals is when an item is released directly to cinemas in Europe. Episodes of The Incredible Hulk, Spiderman, Battlestar Galactica, etc, have been tacked together as supporting "features" in UK cinemas and the reviewers have seen them as theatrical films, and judged by those standards. If a series or movie is made for television then it should be seen and evaluated in the context of the small-screen, and not confusingly panned as an also-ran theatre film. Should four

episodes of, say, Doctor Who be tacked together and shown around local Odeons? 6. For those who may not yet realise it. what we see on our tv sets belongs entirely to the selection and choice of the two groups forming our tv programming. They may say "here is your Sunday afternoon matinee movie" or "here now is your late night ty series" but, most surely, it is not. No one has ever asked me what movie I would want to see Sunday afternoons or what series late at night. And I bet no one has asked you either. The idea is that 26 episodes, or so, of a series are bought and put on. The show could turn out to be the Mount Everest of sheer rubbish but, too bad, you're going to have to be faced with it whether you like it or not. There exists no ruling that if some show bores the entire country into a coma it will be immediately cancelled and something else tried out. The concept of pilot movies or tryout tv series just doesn't exist in this country. You're fed with what they want and tough luck if you don't like it. Surely, shouldn't there be a trial period at the beginning of each programme season

### BY TISE VAHIMAGI



(Autumn, Winter, Summer, etc) allowing viewers to react on a selection of shows, series, themes of movie seasons? If all executive to life hangs on the great god Ratings then shouldn't they consider the thoughts and feelings, the likes and dis-likes of their viewers?

7. Almost every month the magazine racks are crammed with film periodicals: Films Illustrated, Photoplay, Sight & Sound etc. Fine for the film buffs, but where do you go and what do you look for if you want to read something about television? There are of course the tv trade journals, but that's not the same thing. The tv guides themselves (TV Times and Radio Times) rarely have anything intelligent to digest - unless you're into checking out Katie Boyle's garden plants or Noele Gordon's kitchen recipes. Where are the articles written by the actors, directors, tv writers themselves? Where are the in-depth pieces written about British television production and presentation? Where are the series articles questioning what we see on prime-time television, and not the flakey little blurbs pondering who'll get married next on the scap operas or who's taken over Bosanquer's toupe on the ten over Bosanquer's toupe on the ten over Bosanquer's expension of the Emmerdale Farm is not what it's all about, folks. And if there is life on Emmerdale Farm we want to know whywhen where-and-how. So, there should be a suitable publication on a regular basis asking these questions and, generally, looking at television as a serious medium. Where is the serious, intelligent British television magazine?

8. Access television is a dangerous phrase in some quarters. But maybe it has been somewhat misconstrued. I believe in a form of access to television, access to those "thinking minds" behind the tube which should act on the wishes/requests of discerning viewers. We all know that the great majority, the great seething monkeymass out there apparently don't care one iota as long as Kent talks you through Saturday afternoon wrestling. Anna gives you the low-down on the American hostages. Meg keeps the motel afloat, and Ted Rogers comes tripping his silly way down those game-show stairs. There is, however, a little bit more to it

than that. Public reaction is desperately lacking in British television. The BBC-tv department racked up some surprising ratings when they ran The Outer Limits last year. Enough to consider further retros in the same vein sometime in the near future. However, they do not know exactly what you out there want to see. So, before some naive soul in the programming department whisks 266 episodes of Peyton Place on your telescreens, let them hear from you telling them that you want to see seasons of Twilight Zone, Karloff's Thriller, the never-shown (in the UK) Kolchak: The Night Stalker series, or even the first season Wonder Woman episodes. Let them know what you want - otherwise you sure as heck won't get it. Their service is your service.

9. Over 30 years ago small groups of fans decided that there was a wide world of cinema out there that was just not coming through via the commercial cinema chains. So, in order to see rare films and foreign movies they formed film-societies and booked films otherwise unshown to the masses. Now, if the concept and motivation of film-societies exists to serve those in need of minorityappreciation movies then why don't we have ty-societies? Yeah, okay, I'm well aware of the red-tape surrounding unions and copyright, but does that supposedly locked gate have to stay shut? If someone simply says "No" do you meekly accept that and just walk away? No questions asked? If enough ty-societies were started and enough pressure put on the ty syndication companies to make available rarely-seen material then the great misty 'past" of television will become a little clearer. Where are the ty-societies? 10. There are regional film theatres throughout the country which can act as bases for tv-societies - they're always looking for popular programming - so why don't the ty buffs in those far flung places instigate tv retrospectives? I believe, for example, that if the Newcastle Film Theatre received enough sensible requests they may be able to launch a Prisoner or Twilight Zone retro, if enough fans/buffs reacted accordingly. The worst one can do is try - I mean both tv buffs and theatre management and in all likeliehood both parties could possibly fare well. If the first screening is good the next one should be easier to organise. After that you've got yourself a tv-society. Let the film theatres hear from you.

n these post-Star Wars times, it is very rare for a science fiction film to rely ion characterisation and plot rather than the usual special effects of spaceship doglights across the stars.

For that same film to be described as, "Simply put, one of the ten best science fiction films of all time" is almost unprecedented.

The quote is from the respected
American journal *Cinefantastique* earlier
this year. The film is The Lathe of
Heaven.

The first major "made-for-television" movie to be produced for the Public Broadcasting Service in America (similar to our own BBC-TV), The Lathe of Heaven is an adaptation of noted science fiction writer Ursula K. Le Guin's classic 1971 novel of the same title.

Set at the end of the 20th century in Portland, Oregon, the world is suffocating in an atmosphere contaminated by pollution. The polar caps have melted and the problem of overpopulation has become so great that the future of the human race is seriously in doubt.

human race is seriously in doubt.

In this sterile world of unending rainfall and a diminishing food supply,
no-one is more troubled than George Orr

(Bruce Davidson of Willard fame), a young man plagued by recurrent dreams that, he discovers to his horror upon awakening, change reality – although nobody around him seems to notice! In order to find a cure for these. "effective dreams", 'Orr is treated by Dr William Haber (played by award-winning theatre and film actor Kevin Conway), an oneirolosist (specialist in dream therapy).

But rather than trying to cure Orr of his unique affliction. Dr Haber instead tries to exploit the young man's ability to dream effectively for "the benefit of mankind". Using hypnosis Haber forces Orr to dream-up new realities free from war, pestilence and overpopulation, But Haber's idealism soon becomes uncontrollable and the side effects of Orr's dreams often turn out to be disastrous, to cure overpopulation, six billion people die of plague; in trying to unite the Earth's warring population. Orr's subconscious creates an alien attack on the moon bases and in attempting to undo the damage, the alien fleet invade the Earth.

But the aliens are friendly; and while Orr is forced to dream and dream again, continually seeking Dr Haber's own notions of Utopia, the invaders warn him that his awesome power is threatening the very fabric of existence and that those who try to use it for themselves will be "turned on the lathe of Heaven."

In an exciting dimax, Orr must confront Haber for ultimate control as the world crumbles around them and reality comes to an end

Co-produced and co-directed by David R. Loxton (who had previously collaborated with Volume on Between Time and Timbuktu, a Public Television tribute to some of Vonnegur's storylines and Fred Barzyk. The Lathe of Heaven was filmed on location in the futuristic architecture of Dallas, Fort Worth and the Pacific northwest of spring 1979.

In one stunning sequence, Haber orders Orr to dream away racism, with the unpredictable effect that every ones skin, hair and eyes become a ghastly and depressing grey! "At one point I had to be painted head-to-foot in grey grease-paint," Davison recalls, "It was an awful mess. Everyone on the set felt grey and miserable. We were shooting at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Dallas and there were all these conventioneers getting up in the morning with terrible hangovers. They'd walk into the lobby and see 200 grey

### THE LATHE OF HEAN





people in strange costumes milling about. I'm sure we flipped out a lot of them."

But although Davison gives a sympathetic and controlled performance as George Orr, the most interesting character in the film is the ambiguous Dr Haber. As Conway puts it, "Haber's instincts, his intentions are all good. But the tragedy of Haber is that when he finally does get the power, when he hooks himself into his dream augmenting machine, he is found to be hollow. There's nothing of value inside of him that he can impart to the world. That realization burns out his brain. At this point, he loses control of his dreams and begins to cause the world to melt."

Conway was intrigued by the theme of The Lathe of Heaven, which he sees as an exploration of the human mind, ever since he read the Le Guin novel years ago. Thus, when he was saked to appear in the film by the producers, he was quick to accept.

"Because Lathe takes place some time in the future, the characters had to be played in a slightly exaggerated, yet believable, fashion," says Conway. "For example, my character, Dr Haber, is a frustrated individual who enjoys power.

A Special Preview of a new US tv series by Stephen Jones.



Before meeting George Orr he is a virtual nobody, one of thousands of psychiatrists preaction gat the time. When George shows up, it's a god-send. Through George, Haber can let his own imagination run wild and change the world."

tion run wild and change the world."

The producers/directors have used their meagre 800,000 dollar budget marvellously. Although the effects are simple, Loxton and Barzyk utilized the talents of sward-winning science fiction illustrator Ed Emshwiller, composer Laurie Spiegel and computer animator Lillian Schwartz to create special sound effects, graphic displays and scenic design concepts for many visually stunning key sequences. Ursula Le Guin worked as creative consultant on the film and helped to make sure that her story was faithfully adapted by screenwriters Roger Swapbill and Diane English.

Having been filmed on location using the abundence of futuristic-looking architectural structures in Dallas and Fort Worth, the film has a realistic look that even the best special effects and matte paintings can fail to capture.

paintings can fail to capture.
Only the sympathetic aliens are
unconvincing and show signs of budget
restrictions. Looking like man-sized
turtles with glowing heads, the film cries
out for the friendly-looking spacetravellers of Spielberg's Close Encounters.

The Lathe of Heaven was originally intended to be the first in a series of films that would bring the work of serious "speculative fiction" writers to the television screen and debuted on the American PSS channel on January 9th, 1980. For a public used to the vacuous plots of Star Warr, Star Trek and Battlestar Galactica, the film was a revelation and garnered enthusiastic reviews.

The questions that Lathe leaves its audience to ponder — like all the best science fiction — may help us to avoid the nightmare world that a dying George Orr staggers through in the movie's opening minutes.

The Lathe of Heaven is ambitious and imaginative science fiction cinema at its best; that it came from the usual wasteland of American television is all the more remarkable.

It is a film that deserves the widest possible showing.

The Lathe of Heaven (1980) Bruce Davison (George Orr), Kevin Conway (Dr William Haber) Margaret Aven-(Heather Lelache), Payton Park (Mannie Ahrens), Niki Flacks (Penny Crouch). Produced and directed by David R. Loxton and Fred Barzyk, Teleplay by Roger E. Swaybill and Diane English, from the nove by Ursula K, Le Guin, Photographed by Robbie Greenberg, Music by Michael Smell, Art Direction by John Wright Stevens, Edited by Dick Bartlett. Produced by the Television Laboratory at WNET/THIRTEEN, New York, In esociation with Taurus-Film. 120 mins.









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remember taking a car ride with producer Ilya Salkind to Pinewood studios when Superman — The Movie was just in its final stages of post production.

Ilya was a worried man. He hadn't, at that time, even worked out exactly how much the movie was costing because much of Part Two had been filmed at the same time — should the film prove successful enough to warrant a sequel.

"I tell ya this," said Salkind to me as we pulled up outside his studio office, "if this film flops I'll probably shoot

myself."

Well, Superman — The Movie went on to earn itself a sensational three hundred million dollars and Ilya Salkind didn't shoot himself after all. Christopher Reeve as Superman/Clark Kent became an international star and he was all set to go up, up and away in Superman II for which he received about half a million dollars plus a share of the profits. He also ended up with a baby boy, Marthew, from his girlfriend Gae Exton, born during production of Superman II, but I guess that's another story.

Anyway, the Man of Steel was back before the cameras during 1979 and 1980, but as Ilya Salkind insists, "Superman II is not a sequel, in the sense that a sequel is usually an afterthought, intended to capitalize on a surprise hit.

"This movie was planned — and announced — before the original Superman started production. It was, and is, a two-parter."

Preparation for Part Two was well under way early in 1979. Because much of it had already been filmed it posed problems that few, if any, motion pictures had previously experienced. Cinematographer Geoffrey Unsworth died shortly after the previous Superman was in the can, his work in Part Two was carried on by 80 Paynter and so the rather confusing credit titles announce that the film was "photographed by Geoffrey Unsworth" while Director of Photography was Paynter.

Also, production designer John Barry, whose creations included the fabulous Fortress of Solitude and Lax Luthor's Grand Central Lair, passed from this world to the ngxt, and you can bet he'll put in some re-designing there too. His vision of a world in which "wish fulfillment is reality" was carried forward by Peter Murton.

Then there was the problem over who would direct Part Two. Superman — The Movie had been begun by Guy Hamilton who was superseded by Richard Donner (who, if you didn't know it, was against casting Chris Reeve originally because he felt Reeve was too young for the part).

After a rift with the Superman producers Ilya Salkind and Pierre Spengler, Donner was fired from the project in March of '79 and replaced by Richard







Top: Superman (Christopher Reeve) uses his super-strength to stop a min-away bus during his battle with the three Kryptonian villains. Centre: Non Lleck O'Halloren) hams it up in Superman's Fortress of Solitude, egged on by Luthor iene Hackman), Ursa (Sarah Douglas) and Zod (Terence Stamp). Left: Supernan with Lols Lana (Margot Kidder),

Lester. Part Two resumed shooting in August that year.

Originally, Lester insisted that his name be left off the credits because he had no hand in either the script or the casting, but was simply working on Donner's blueprint.

However, Lester still found it a challenging subject to put on film, and he compiled two enormous reference books to assist him in his venture.

"One was a glossary containing indexed cross-references to all the characters in the Supermen sage and all the names," he explains. "Krypton — what does it mean? Super-dog — when did he first appear? And how do you take him for a walk? And so on. You get hooked on that kind of craciness.

"The other book has summaries of all the stories over 35-odd years of Superman. Both books were useful. They helped the writers and myself produce new areas of action. DC comics has control over the rights, so we had to stick to certain bounds as far as Superman's powers were concerned. But we could give him new adventures. And also, of course, any touches of humour or imagination that came to us."

Something else went missing in Part, Two. Marlon Brando. One report says that the producers were unhappy with Brando's mental state, although he had already completed twenty minutes of film for Part Two. Chris Reeve thinks differently.

"I gather that if they'd used those scenes they would have had to pay Marion a huge amount of money, as he had a percentage of the gross. So it's a business decision, not an artistic one. And that made me unhappy. The father-son relationship was very important to Part Two."

Instead, Susannah York, who played Supie's mun in the first movie, returned to refilm Brando's scenes and communicate with her son in the Fortress of Solitude. Susannah, a mother off-screen, once told me that she was happy to play Superman's mother because, "my kids all reckoned that if I was Supermum they all had to be Superkids." Well, she certainly didn't expect to be returning in Part Two.

"Despite the creative continuity that links Superman and Superman II," points out Ilya Salkind, "there are distinct differences between the films. Superman set up who our hero was and how he came here. Then it pitted his super powers against things and events — rockets, earthquakes, tidal waves.

"This time, his enemies are people. They have the same phenomenal gifts he does, but choose to use them for evil."

The people he is referring to are the trio of baddies whom you may recall were cast out of Krypton into exile at the beginning of Superman. In Superman II they escape their fate and find their way





to Earth to wreak revenge on the son of Jor-EI.

Leading the trio is Zod, played by Terence Stamp. Adding some camp glamour to the proceedings is Sarah Douglas as Ursa. And playing Non, a sort of cross between a Wookiee and Jaws (in the Bond films, that is) is ex-heavyweight fighter Jack O'Halloran.

Terence Stamp took his role very seriously. "If you set out to be tongue-incheek, the audience knows you're kidding

and you lose credibility.

"So, I had to seek out the demon in myself — which had proven unnerving. I have found, for example, that if someone cuts me off in a car, I want to chase them and knock them around, to teach them a lesson."

Stamp was fascinated with two other facets of Zod's make-up. One was his "power trip" when he determines to rule the world. "Most criminals are in it for the money," says Stamp. "The really dangerous ones graduate to power. They either become underworld bosses or world leaders.

"But Zod doesn't even have pockets in his black Kryptonian outfit. He's strictly a power junkie."

The other side of Zod that intrigued him was the flying, care of Zoran Perisic's revolutionary process which, to put it very simply, has the actors dangling on a pole that sticks out of a back projection screen.

"Despite what Chris Reeve is always saying," emphasises Stamp, "it is dange-

rous. Your timing has to be perfect or you can break your neck up there.
"I like the risk because it adds an

"I like the risk because it adds an excitement — a split second reaction time — to our performances that wouldn't exist otherwise."

Sarah Douglas was put through her screen test flying around the studio in a special rig, to see if she could get the hang of it.

She found the sensation of flying "like nothing else in the world. While you're up there, it's absolutely exhilarating, but landing safely is tricky.

"I kept wanting to say things like, 'This is Sarah Douglas to Tower. Am I cleared for landing? Should I lower my flaps?'"

Previously, Sarah's roles were generally damsels-in-distress-types. Playing someone as evil as Ursa proved a challenge for Sarah who's only natural attribute to the role was her height.
"I walked around, saying to myself, "

hate the human race. I hate men. Give me death and destruction.' It's just an actor's trick.

"I also practised sucking in my cheeks, accompanied by a balleful stare, which will make anyone – even a department store Santa – look mean. It worked, although it's very difficult to talk with your cheeks sucked in!

"I also found that tensing my neck muscles helped, although my ears tended to wiggle involutarily!"

Her face was plastered with white make-up and she wore a tight black organza outfit "with daring little slits everywhere so you think you see me in places you don't."

The effect was so menacing that even Gene Hackman, back again as Lex Luthor, was fooled when he saw pictures of Sarah from The Land That Time Forgot in a corridor at Pinewood studios.

"My, what a pretty girl," remarked Sarah to Hackman.

Top left: Eve Teschmacher (Valerie Perrine) and Lex Luthor (Gene Hackman) discover Superman's Fortress of Solitude. Top right: In the Fortress Lois (Margot Kidder) and Superman (Christopher Reveu) enjoy a quiet mae. Blook uleft: Superman and Zod (Tenneco Stemp) battle it out on New York's 42nd Street, Below right: Superman is forced to step into a cabinet which will strip him of his superman powers.





"She's okay," replied Gene, "but she's not in your class."

Pinavood was the home base for both Superman movies. There the offices of the Daily Planet were constructed. So was the awestome Fortress of Solitude. But this polar hideaway of Superman's was no ice-box, despite how it looked on the screen. In fact, because it was a palace of crystals, it had to be illuminated by so many "brute" spot lights that firemen were on hand throughout filming.

The firefighters had to constantly check the temperature near the roof which normally hovered around a

hundred degrees.

When the thermometer soared beyond a hundred and thirty, filming was halted because the fire sprinklers in the roof were set off at a hundred and fifty decress.

But even the Fortress of Solitude was outclassed by the movie's biggest set — an exact replica of New York's 42nd Street. It cost more than two million bucks to erect and stretched for 800 feet although it was built and photographed in such a way as to look like it ran from the Hudson to the East River.

This set included the offices of the Daily Planet, subway entrances, fashion boutiques, newstands, thirty lamp posts, 12 working traffic lights, a dozen fire hydrants, three phone booths and a

traffic jam.

The studies also housed the hotel set where the film's most sacrilegious moments are enacted . . . when Lois Lane (Margot Kidder) discovers Superman's identity and the two fall head over heels for each other, to later wind up in bed in the Fortress of Solitude.

The hotel scene, which in the script is set at Niagara Falls, was in fact the first to be filmed between Reeve and Kidder following their long hiatus. Reeve was

delighted with the sequence.

"It's a classic romantic triangle. The tind nice guy is smitten with the beautiful girl. But she loves the strong, daring hero. In this case, however, I'm both men, so I'm in the awkward position of being iealous of myself."

The love scenes are an integral part of Superman II and are its biggest flaw. Still, it gave Margot and Chris the opportunity to actually go to Niagara for some location shooting. Reeve was also whisked off to Norway to be filmed dragging his feet through the snow towards his Fortress. Another time, they flaw him and a big unit to the island of St Lucla for just a few moments of film when Superman lands in a rain forrest to pick all flower for Lois.

"I'd hate to think what it cost just to do that;" says Reeve. But then, the whole operation cost something like sixty million dollars.

An interesting exercise while watching Superman II is trying to spot which scenes were filmed with the earlier film which moments have the Dick Donner touch and which ones have the Dick Lester touch. You can feel prætty sure that much of the special effects stuff was shot during Superman and most definitely the scene when the villainous trio blast the faces of the American Presidents from Mount Rushmore and replace them with their own likenesses, was filmed during the original production.

It was Richard Donner who boasted, "We built Mount Rushmore and blew it up. It may have been a miniature, but those faces were six feet high."

There is also speculation as to just how much Lester himself filmed, He claims that there were something like half a dozen people directing Superman II. Certainly, in a film like Superman you can include people like Derek Meddings, who directed the miniatures and additional flying sequences, Zoran Perisic, who is credited as having directed the special effects on the Flying Drill, David Toblin and Robert Lynn who directed the 2nd Unit which is always a vital yet under

much I owe to Superman," says Chris who shortly before starting work on Part Two turned down the role of e gigolo because it was "too radical a departure from the Superman image.

"While I don't intend to make a lifelong career out of Superman, I figure I owe it to the producers — and in a sense, to the audience — not to do a complete role raversi

role reversal.

"Like most people of my age, I was brought up on Superman. I knew the classic stance — hands on hips, cape blowing in the breaze, bullets bouncing off his chest. That's the way six and a half billion people have lowed Superman and I wouldn't dream of changing it.

"I must say, it was hard getting back into the role, especially having filmed Somewhere In Time between the two Superman movies. I'd forgotten in what good physical condition I had to be in. You know, when I first got the role I was hardly type cast. I sort of looked like Jimmy Stewart standing sideways.



rated part of the filming process, and Colin Chilvers who directed the overall special effects. Add Lester and Donner and that makes seven directors at least.

Now that the carnival is over and Superman II is at least in the can, it has to start all over again for Superman III. And it probably won't end there. Ilya Salkind made it very clear when he said, "We can go on making Superman films indefinitely."

And I'm sure they will, competing eternally with George Lucas it seems as he continues his Star Wars sagas which Anthony Daniels, who plays C3PO as if you didn't know, claims will keep him in work until he's 61.

The question on everybody's lips (it is, isn't it?) is will Chris Reeve play Supie in Part Three?

"If I like the script, there'll be no the ro question about it. I'll never forget how mess."

"I had to put on 30 pounds of muscle. In fact, I found muscles I never knew I had."

Chris has certainly made the part of Superman very much his own, making Kirk Alyn and George Reeves look pale in comparison. He injected more than just brain and brawn into the role.

"Superman is a strange land, a solitary man with incredible powers, trying to fit into his adopted planet," says Chris "He has warmth and a great sense of humour. And while he has sworn to uphold 'truth, justice and the American way', there's nothing self-conscious about him. That's simply what he believes in, in a world filled with arch-criminals and evil geniuses.

"But," he concludes, "Clark Kent is more fun to play. There's more scope to the role because he is such an awful

